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MEMOIRS

OF

THE ABBÉ EDGEWORTH;

CONTAINING HIS

NARRATIVE OF THE LAST HOURS

OF

LOUIS XVI.

BY

C. SNEYD EDGEWORTH.

London:
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1815.

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FRANCH
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY

L'ABBÉ EDGWORTH DE FERMONT,

Confesseur de Louis XVI.

Fils de St. Louis montez au Ciel.

London Published May 1.1815. by R. Hunter St. Paul's Church Yard.

TO

HIS MOST CHRISTIAN MAJESTY,

LOUIS XVIII.

King of France and Navarre,

&c. &c. &c.

SIRE,

WHEN these Memoirs were sent to the press, your Majesty filled the throne of St. Louis; but France, too long estranged from religion and public virtue, knew not the value of the blessings your Majesty's influence was beginning to diffuse.

The ways of Providence are inscrutable, but they are just; and when remorseless ambition shall have become its own victim, and a guilty generation shall have atoned by its afflictions for its crimes, I trust that we shall see the Bourbons

restored to their people, France to Freedom, and the world to repose.

But at no period could I have approached your Majesty with sentiments of more profound veneration, or with a prouder feeling have laid at your Majesty's feet the records of the fidelity of the Abbé Edgeworth to your Majesty's illustrious House.

May devoted loyalty like his, inspire every heart in your Majesty's dominions, and may the result of impending events be such as may most redound to the honor of your Majesty and the happiness of mankind.

I have the honor to be,
With the utmost respect,
Your Majesty's
Obedient humble Servant,
C. SNEYD EDGEWORTH.

London, May 1, 1815.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

ABBÉ EDGEWORTH.

At this moment of universal peace, when we see the Bourbons re-established on the throne of their ancestors, the mind passing over the scene of bloodshed and tyranny that has intervened, naturally looks back to that period, when a legitimate sovereign swayed the sceptre of France.

It is twenty-two years since the murder of Louis the Sixteenth; and yet his funeral sermon has but just been delivered; the mournful procession has but lately blackened the streets of Paris;

and many a faithful heart, that long had grieved in secret, has at length received the consolation of public sympathy, and the elevating sanction of religion. At such a period, it is impossible not to recollect him, whose pious heroism supported that unfortunate monarch in his last moments.

The Editor of the following memoir, who is one of the Abbé Edgeworth's nearest surviving relations, has endeavoured to collect some particulars of his life.

This he considered as a tribute justly due to the memory of a man, who has acted such a distinguished part in the events of the French revolution.

The Editor has perhaps felt another motive for writing these memoirs,—an honest pride in claiming relationship

with one, whose virtues have so distinguished him among his fellow-creatures, and whose conduct must secure for him such an honourable place in history.

An ancient writer has observed, that the great or good actions of a distinguished character not only confer dignity upon his posterity, but reflect a lustre upon his ancestors; consequently, some account of the ancestors of so distinguished an individual as the Abbé Edgeworth, cannot be uninteresting.

Henry Essex Edgeworth, the subject of this memoir, was descended from Francis Edgeworth, who came with his brother Edward to Ireland, in the reign of queen Elizabeth, about the year 1582. Francis was clerk of the hanaper in the reign of James the First, and Edward was, about the same time, Bi-

shop of Down and Connor. Captain John Edgeworth, son of Francis, married for his second wife Mrs. Bridgman, widow of Edward Bridgman, of Lancashire, who was brother to the Lord Keeper. Captain John Edgeworth had a son by a former wife, and Mrs. Bridgman had a daughter by a former husband: this daughter was an heiress of considerable property. Soon after Capt. Edgeworth's arrival in Ireland, the young people intermarried, and had a number of sons, from whom the present families of the name are descended. In 1671, Captain Edgeworth was knighted at Whitehall by James the Second; an honour which he was anxious to decline; for his principles were so averse to the Stuart family, that at the Revolution Sir John Edgeworth and his sons raised a regi-

ment for King William, of which he was appointed Colonel; his eldest son, Francis, was Lieut.-Colonel; and his sons, Robert and Henry, held Captains' commissions under their father; his fifth son, Essex, was grandfather to the Abbé Edgeworth; he was bred at the university of Dublin, for holy orders, and was first presented to the living of Granard, in the county of Longford. His assiduous attention to his parishioners, and his unblemished life of active devotion, recommended him to Goodwin, Bishop of Kilmore and Ardagh, who gave him the living of Temple-Michael, which is considered the best preferment in the diocese of Ardagh. When he waited on the Bishop, to return him thanks for an advancement, for which he had never made the slightest application, the Bi-

shop told him, he did not deserve his thanks; "for," said he, "if I had known "a better man in my diocese than you, "I should have given the benefice to "him."

The Bishop had reason to congratulate himself on having chosen a man, whose increase of income only enlarged his sphere of benevolence. His pious and useful efforts were ably assisted by his wife, who was a daughter of Sir Robert King, of Rockingham, in the county of Roscommon.

Their eldest son, Robert, father of the Abbé Edgeworth, married the granddaughter of the justly celebrated Archbishop Ussher. Robert was presented to the living of Edgeworthstown, in the county of Longford, which he enjoyed for some years, and in the vicarage-house

Henry Essex Edgeworth came into the world.*

It is singular that the great grandson of Archbishop Ussher, born, baptized, and at first nurtured in the very bosom of the established religion, under the eye of his cousin's family, whose attachment to the Protestant faith was almost proverbial, should render himself conspicuous in that church, the doctrines of which every branch of his family, but his own, zealously dissented from.

When he was four years of age, Henry's father determined to give up his preferment, which he could no longer conscientiously hold, and to remove with his family to France. The

* In this house Oliver Goldsmith received the rudiments of education from Mr. Patrick Hughes:

"A man severe he was, and stern to view,
"I knew him well, and every truant knew."

children of Mr. Edgeworth, the proprietor of Edgeworthstown, and their little cousins, were allowed to take leave of each other at the house of Mr. Edgeworth's agent; and this parting scene is still remembered by the family.—Robert, Henry, and their sister, were taken by their parents to Toulouse. A younger son, whose name was Ussher, remained in Ireland. The family were enabled to establish themselves at Toulouse, from the income of some estate which Mr. Robert Edgeworth possessed in the county of Longford, part of which was called *Firmount*, whence Henry afterwards took his title of Abbé de Firmont.

It is to be regretted that the Editor could obtain no particulars of the early life and education of the Abbé. He

could learn only that Henry was educated at Toulouse, by his parents, in the Romish faith, which they had adopted; that in due time he entered the university of Toulouse, where rhetoric and the classics were his favourite studies. After the death of his father, the Abbé's eldest brother Robert, returned to Ireland to take possession of his property, and the subject of these memoirs went, at the recommendation of his friend, Dr. Moylan, late titular Bishop of Cork, to Paris, under the care of the venerable Abbé de la Roche, superior of the seminary of *Trente Trois*,* or the Holy Family. At this seminary the Abbé resided, and after going through a course of philosophy at the college of Navarre, and of theology at the Sorbonne, his

* So called from the age of our Saviour at his death.

ardent desire to devote himself to a clerical life was gratified. After he was ordained, Mr. Edgeworth retired to the seminary of Les Missions Etrangeres, Rue du Bacq. "The capital of France," says M. l'Abbé de Bouvens,* "now became the "theatre of the Abbé Edgeworth's apos- "tolic labours. It was in this immense "city, where all the passions ferment, "and where vice, with so much art, pre- "sents itself under such a variety of "forms, that he commenced his minis- "try." ****** "Never did man shew "more invariable benignity and gentle- "ness, or a piety more consoling to his "fellow-creatures. This evangelical "man was often seen with a counte-

* In his funeral sermon on the Abbé Edgeworth, preached in the French Chapel, King-street, Portman-square, 27th July, 1807.

" nance radiant with joy, surrounded " by the poor, and by the lower orders " of workmen of Paris, leading them to " his tribunal of peace."

He devoted his time early every morning to the instruction of the poor Savoyards of Paris, whom he attended in his parish church. The rest of his day was chiefly employed in study and in prayer. His virtues, his talents, and the services he rendered to his church, could not long remain unknown in Paris; and the fame of his exemplary conduct, and of his useful zeal, in due time reached his native country. " There many re- " spectable prelates, who were at the " head of the Irish Catholic church; " and who, whilst they watched over " the interests of that church, wished, in " the true spirit of the gospel, to restrain

" party animosities, thought that the " Abbé Edgeworth was a man of all " others the most capable of seconding " their wise and prudent zeal. They " now appreciated the value of the trea- " sure of which France had robbed " them, and wishing to recover it, they " offered the Abbé a bishoprick in Ire- " land."

The Abbé, feeling that he was of more use in Paris than he could hope to be any where else, and the strong representations on the subject which he received from his own confessor, and the urgent entreaties of those who were under his care, determined him not to abandon his charge, or change his humble situation for any dignities or temporal advantages that could be offered to him. It was thus that his unaffected humility and piety

were the means under Providence of retaining him in that country, where he was afterwards to act so distinguished a part; and whilst he was thus retiring from the only chance of temporal distinction which, in the ordinary course of his life, was likely ever to occur, he was actually fixing in that situation which would best prepare him for the heroic part he was afterwards to perform. In this situation he continued in the daily habitual sacrifice of every selfish consideration to a sense of duty, and of every temporal advantage or pleasure to his exalted sense of religion. Perfectly free from all desire of fame, and even without any wish of attracting the attention of the superiors of his church, he persevered in his pious mission. His con-

duct and his character were however silently and justly appreciated.

On the death of her Confessor, the Princess Elizabeth wrote to the Superior of *Les Missions Etrangeres;* and requested that he would recommend another to her. He, who was acquainted with all the ecclesiastics in Paris, selected the Abbé Edgeworth, as one of the most virtuous and enlightened, in whom the Princess might place implicit confidence. It was necessary that this choice of the Confessor to the Princess Elizabeth should be confirmed by the Archbishop of Paris. Mr. Edgeworth had obtained his esteem and regard. The Archbishop introduced him at court; and as soon as the Abbé became known, he was respected, and actually venerated

by the amiable Princess, whose devotions he was appointed to direct. By her means he became known and esteemed by many other members of the royal family.

From this period till the commencement of the French revolution, the Abbé, fulfilling his duties, left no trace of his history, except in the hearts of those to whom his virtues were intimately known. He entered into no court intrigues, no popular cabals. The feelings with which he saw the rise and progress of the French revolution, especially as it concerned religion, and particularly the religion which he professed, can be learnt from the following letters, which were addressed by him to his highly esteemed friend, Dr. Moylan.

TO THE RIGHT REV. DR. MOYLAN,
CORK, IRELAND.

Paris, 21st May, 1789.

"MY LORD AND EVER DEAR FRIEND,

"I have been long in your debt; but it is my head and not my heart you must accuse. Other men, with twice my business, find time for all; their days are long enough; mine, of late, fly away, I know not how; and they are commonly too short for the little I have to do.

"I cannot return you too many thanks for the kind desire you express of seeing me fixed on my native soil. Indeed the prospect of living on the same land with you, and of enjoying now and then your company, is a most powerful attraction to my heart. But, alas! it is the only

one I feel. Ireland is a foreign country to me. You are almost the only friend I count in it. Thirty-eight years absence have broke the very ties of blood with some of my relations, and weakened them with all. The language itself sounds odd in my ears, for want of use; and the few lines I am writing to you are a laborious task for me. What I say of the language, I must likewise say of the laws, the manners, the customs, &c.—they are all foreign to me: and on my native land I would be as much a stranger as you would be in Italy or Spain: add to this, that of all the posts I could fill in Ireland, those alone that would be adapted perhaps to my weak abilities, and which I would really prefer, (country parishes), would be overtoilsome for a shattered constitution

like mine: for though much better in my health to-day than I was a year or two ago, I am still far from being a strong man.

" I am convinced, my Lord and dear friend, that if you weigh all this as impartially as I have done, from time to time, you will confess that few men are less calculated for the mission of Ireland than me. Nay, that of all our clerical absentees, I am perhaps the one whose loss is less to be regretted.

" I cannot say, however, that, in my present situation, I am totally lost for my own country. Formerly I worked a good deal among the French; but since I have been condemned by the physicians to draw in, my labours if I can call them so, are almost entirely confined within the narrow circle of

English and Irish whom Providence brings over to Paris: so that if I come to fail, another priest must be sent over from Ireland to supply my place. In fact, I see no spot in Europe better calculated for me than the house I am in. All that displeases me of it is, that it does not cut off at once all communication between me and the world, which would be my greatest ambition; for I perceive every day, more and more, how hard it is to work for others without neglecting oneself. You have heard of our riots; they were soon quelled; but many hundreds lost their lives in them. Our states are sitting. The clergy and nobility behave well in general; but the commoners do not agree with them. God alone knows how matters will turn out.

" My brother and family desire to be remembered to you and yours in the warmest terms.

I must subscribe abruptly,

My Lord,

Your servant and friend,

EDGEWORTH."

Paris, 28th Oct. 1789.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

" MY LORD AND EVER DEAR FRIEND,

" I wrote to you a couple of months ago, by Mr. Burke, but gave you then no news, as the bearer had been eye-witness to all our troubles, and could tell you more in one half hour's conversation than I could have done in three pages.

" Since that time our affairs, far from

mending, seem to grow worse and worse. The republican party still prevails. Our King, the best of men, has been obliged to quit Versailles, and come to Paris, where he now resides, (how freely I leave you to judge). The National Assembly has followed him, and holds its sessions in the Archbishop's palace, until a more commodious place can be fitted up. We have no less than thirty thousand men under arms, mostly composed of our petit bourgeois de Paris, as nice and delicate as you may easily suppose. The same, with due proportion, must be said of every town and village in France; for they all seem to vie with the capital, and aspire to the privilege of governing themselves. I suppose your journals have given you a full account of this

amazing revolution; and I am very sure you have been tempted, more than once, to suppose the circumstances exaggerated, if not absolutely false; but you must not judge of the French to-day by what they were a few years ago. No nation in the world has ever undergone so complete a change of principles in so short a time. Modern philosophy has broke all religious, all social ties. Incredulity has crept down from the master to the groom; and if things go on a few years longer, the French will have nothing remaining of that they formerly were, but their language and their name. Indeed, what we now see with our own eyes, is, according to me, a stronger confutation of our new systems, than all the polemical essays that have been levelled against them.

" God alone knows what the issue will be. But in all likelihood, if France is to be saved from utter ruin, she will be indebted for her new life to the remote provinces, where corruption of principles does not so universally prevail. I am told, that some of them complain already of the national meeting, and these complaints may easily be propagated from one province to another. But then a civil war must ensue, which is an evil still greater than all those we now experience. In the meanwhile our Assembly goes on cutting down, as they say, all the remnants of barbarity and ignorance. To-morrow the great question, " *is the church re-* " *venue a private property, or the pro-* " *perty of the nation,*" is to be discussed

and finally determined. If it be declared the property of the nation, as most people apprehend it will, the consequence is obvious: all may be seized; and bishops, curates, vicars, can be reduced to a salary.

"There you have, my dear friend, the outlines of our present situation. Near three hundred of our deputies have lost patience, and taken various pretexts to get away. Unfortunately they who remain are not the best. The Archbishop of Paris is one of those who has eloped. His life was threatened, and he thought it prudent to leave France. A countryman of ours, son to the unfortunate General Lally, one of the most sensible members of the Assembly, has also steered aloof; but be-

fore leaving France, he published a most excellent performance against all that was doing at the States.

" My mother and sister join in most respectful compliments to you and your's. They are both upon the watch, and intend leaving France, if our troubles grow worse. I shall accompany them wherever they go, (probably to London); but must come back, as it would be unbecoming a soldier to quit his post for fear of a cannon ball. I must request of you to return your sister my thanks, for the little bottle of salts she has been so kind as to send me: if to this favour she will add her prayers, of which I stand much in need, my gratitude will be unbounded. I finish without ceremony, and without signature, as I speak too plain.

" We have lost one of the most holy prelates of the church of France—the Bishop of Boulogne. His successor is an acquaintance of your's,—Mr. Asseline, with whom you lived at Trente-Trois. The choice has been universally applauded."

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

" My Lord and truly dear Friend,

" Your favour of the 25th ult. came to hand this afternoon. By what chance my last to you was so long delayed upon the road I cannot imagine. Perhaps it was opened at the post-office here; for though we receive daily assurances that we are a free people, I doubt it still: and the only difference I

find between past and present times, is, that we formerly were happy slaves, whereas at present we are very slavish freemen. However, I did well not to sign my letter; and I ask you for the future the same permission.

"I cannot tell by words how grateful I am for the tender concern you express for me and mine. Indeed I have had within these few months past some painful moments on account of my mother. I would have wished her out of a country, where she finds no longer what she came to seek in it; but her age, her infirmities, and the sedentary life she has lead these twelve years past, made me apprehend the consequences of a long journey much more than the daily riots of the place. I have therefore put off, from week to week, urging a change of

place. However, we have often spoke of it, as of a thing that might become necessary, if matters continued bearing so dismal an aspect in France: and I can assure you, that of all spots in Ireland, the one her heart warms to most is Cork. She has hinted this to me over and over; and I need not tell you what the load-stone is. But if things go on as they have done since the King resides in Paris, it would be a rash step, at her time of life, to undertake so long a journey; for we now enjoy peace; the Court goes hand in hand with the National Assembly; all the decrees are sanctioned without resistance, and the Monarch seems to have laid aside all thoughts of retrieving his authority. As long as he continues so, there can be no source of disturbances, unless the

provinces rise against the metropolis, or some great man makes a party to save the crown; both which are equally improbable; for, in the provinces as well as in the capital, the republican spirit seems to prevail. It is impossible to say how far the National Assembly means to go; but you may depend upon it, we have not seen half as yet. You have heard of the famous decree, by which all church revenues are declared to be at the free disposition of the nation. Since that day, they have done little or nothing in regard to ecclesiastical matters, being wholly taken up with other affairs; but if we can judge by the pamphlets which are daily spread about, many other objects, such as public worship for all sects, abolition of vows, divorce in a more extensive

sense than Protestants themselves allow it, marriage of priests, &c. will be proposed and strenuously urged for; but with what success God alone can tell. As for myself, I must allow that my former ties to France are now much weakened, and that the prospect of finishing my days with you is particularly enticing: but, alas! my dear friend, what would you do with me? I should be mere lumber in your diocese. You want strong and laborious operators; and I am not that. I must own to you, that from the beginning of our troubles, I had some thoughts of leaving France for good and all; but after taking advice from people who knew me, I resolved to stand my ground; or, if obliged to accompany my mother, to come back to my post. The reason

given to me was, that Almighty God seemed to bless my weak exertions here, and of course that I should not give up my little flock, unless clearly called by Providence to some other place, especially as the little I do was mostly in favour of people who could not well do without me, or without some other person, who would equally be lost to the mission. Indeed, all other reasons aside, I am so accustomed to a community life, that I would not know how to live in the world.

"I must recommend to your pastoral solicitude a young man of your diocese, actually studying medicine in Paris. His father sent him hitherto a competent supply for his studies; but after a silence of many months, (which has obliged the poor young man to go into

debt for five guineas), he writes to him coldly, that he can support him no more. Could you speak to the father, and engage him to alter this cruel sentence; or, if in an absolute impossibility of supporting his son, until the end of his studies, which would be a great pity, as he is a very promising youth, to send him at least wherewith to pay his little debts, and defray the expenses of his journey home? The father's name is Fitzgerald, a cooper, in Cork.

"A speedy answer would be an act of charity to the poor young man. I forgot asking in what street he lives; but his son tells me he is not unknown to you, having been formerly your class-fellow. My mother desires to be remembered to you in the warmest terms; my sister joins her, and will write to

Miss Moylan by the first sure hand. I must finish, and subscribe—*Amicus quo non amicior alter.*"

The Editor has carefully copied these letters from the originals in his possession, not venturing to alter the inaccuracies of style or orthography, which betray the Abbé's estrangement from his native language, and that he not only habitually expressed himself, but usually thought in French.

The sympathy of the public has been too long engaged by letters in rounded periods, full of affected description and pompous frivolity, composed to be handed about amongst literary gossips, during the life, and to be splendidly

published at the death of the writer; but some readers will dwell with interest on the genuine simplicity of these humble epistles. They never could have been intended for the public eye:—their very defects become their recommendation.

The illiberal, who suppose that something dangerous must flow from the pen of every Papist, when writing in confidence to a brother-clergyman, will be surprised to find in these letters neither bigotry nor treason. They shew the unambitious character, and the pious occupations of the writer. It is to be regretted, that of these pursuits so little can be retraced; seldom could the reader have accompanied so pure a character in his path through life.—Could we follow him from his morning to his evening devotions, we should find

the interval filled up with none of those inconsistencies, which so often make the good sigh, and the wicked sneer.—

In the midst of splendour, when the great, perplexed with intrigue and flattery, sought for simplicity and truth; in scenes of squalid misery, where repenting vice had crept to die; in the convent, or in the drawing-room, the Abbé Edgeworth was always the same. —His serene countenance diffused tranquillity wherever he appeared. So great was the fascination of his manners, that their influence alone convinced those who were too weak to examine for themselves, that his religious tenets were well founded. It happened that an American gentleman, in the suite of La Fayette, spent a day in the society of the Abbé Edgeworth. He was so struck

by his manners, and the excellence of his sentiments on every subject upon which he conversed, that he declared that he would adopt the Abbé de Firmont's religion, as he was convinced, from his serenity, that it must be the best. In vain did La Fayette represent that this was no criterion—in vain remind the youth that his parents, who were Presbyterians, would never forgive him for so rash a determination.—He was resolved—embraced the Roman Catholic faith—took orders—returned to America, and became a zealous controversial writer. With controversy our Abbé did not interfere; content with the sure and blameless course of his peaceful calling. His kindness and his charity led the way to the hearts of his flock, and no doubts of the truth of

what he taught disturbed their understandings.

He was unambitious also of making proselytes. When one of his cousins, who is a Protestant, was in Paris in the year 1788, he visited at her house; shewed her every attention in his power; but never spoke on religious subjects.

With the elder branch of the family the Abbé Edgeworth did not correspond. He had been so long absent from Ireland, that they were personally strangers to him. They knew him only by reputation, and by the descriptions which they had heard from his elder brother Robert, with whom they had become acquainted when he came to Ireland to take possession of his estate. Robert was a most amiable young man, and had an enthusiastic affection and

reverence for the Abbé. He has been dead many years; and whatever letters or papers he possessed, went of course into the hands of the younger brother, Ussher, who remained in Ireland. Mr. Ussher Edgeworth survived the Abbé some years; and as the brothers corresponded, great hopes were conceived of obtaining from him letters and interesting accounts of the Abbé. But during his life nothing could be learned from him on this subject. Though an excellent man, who had no occasion for artifice, yet he was ever reserved and mysterious; and though benevolent, and easily imposed upon by those who appealed to his feelings, yet with others he was circumspect and suspicious. He was naturally of an uncommonly timid disposition, and this apprehensive

temperament was probably increased by a feeble constitution, and the circumstances in which he was placed. He had never distinctly avowed his religious tenets; and, during many years of his life, he lived in perpetual dread of an inquiry into his title to his estates. At that time the penal laws against the Catholics were in force: these have since, happily for Ireland, for family peace, for social confidence, and for the true interests of the Christian religion, been repealed. But it often happens, that habits of mind continue after the causes by which they were first induced are removed; and long after the original motives are forgotten, they seem automatically to govern the thoughts and the actions. So it happened in the case of this worthy, but superabundantly cautious gentle-

man. At his death, which happened a few years ago, a diligent search was made among his papers, by his executor, in consequence of an application from the writer of this memoir. But there is reason to fear, that the too careful brother burnt all the Abbé's letters that were in his possession; even the original of the interesting narrative of the events that preceded and followed the death of Louis the Sixteenth, which the Abbé had written to his brother: But for a copy of this valuable document the Editor is indebted to the Rev. Dr. Moylan, who, alas! is now beyond the reach of any tribute of human gratitude.

Before we read this private letter, which gives a particular detail of his *own* perils and adventures, it will be

proper to lay before the reader what is more of an historical document, an account which the Abbé Edgeworth wrote of the last moments of Louis the Sixteenth.*

An Account of the last moments of Louis the Sixteenth, written by the Abbé Edgeworth.

(The original in French is given in the Appendix.)

" The fate of the King was not yet decided, when M. de Malesherbes, to whom I had not the honour of being

* The following narrative was copied from a manuscript in the British Museum. It is part of a splendid work, beautifully written, and adorned with portraits designed by the pen, of most of the Royal Family of France, and of many individuals who had distinguished themselves during the Revolution. It is compiled by the Marquis de Sy, and is preserved with uncommon attention in the British Museum, in a table of curious contrivance.

personally known, and who could neither ask me to his house, nor come to mine, requested me to meet him at Mad. de Senosan's, where I accordingly waited on him.

"There M. de Malesherbes delivered to me a message from the King,* signifying the wish of that unfortunate monarch that I should attend him at his last moments, if the atrocity of his subjects should be contented with nothing less than his death. This message was conveyed in terms, which I should have

* *Note by the Editor.*

I think it right here to repeat the words of Louis the Sixteenth, when he gave this message to M. de Malesherbes.

"This is a strange commission, M. de Malesherbes," said the King, "for me to give to a *philosopher*; but if you should "ever be doomed to die, as I must die, I wish that you may "have, as I have, the support of religion. Religion would "console you, far better than philosophy."

It was consistent with the integrity and candour of M. de Malesherbes to leave these words upon public record.

thought it my duty to suppress, if they did *not* demonstrate the excellence of that prince, whose tragical end I am going to relate. He carried the delicacy of his expressions so far, as to ask as a *favour*, the services he had a right to demand from me as a duty. He claimed them as the last proof of my attachment. He hoped that I would not refuse him. He added, that if the danger to which I must be exposed, should appear to me too great, he begged that I would name another clergyman to attend him. He left the choice entirely to me.

"Any man would have felt himself inclined to comply with such a message. I felt it as a command that could not be disobeyed; and I conjured M. de Malesherbes to represent to the King all that

a feeling heart, broken by grief, dictated to me at the moment.

" Several days past away, and hearing nothing said, I indulged the hope that the King would only be banished, or that at least his fate would be deferred for some time; when, on the 20th of January, at four o'clock in the afternoon, a stranger called on me, and presented to me a note, containing these words: ' The Executive Council having business of the highest importance to communicate to Citizen Edgeworth de Firmont, invites him to come instantly to its sittings.'—The stranger added, that he had orders to accompany me, and that a carriage waited for us in the street. I went with him to the Thuilleries, where the Council held its meetings. I found all the ministers assem-

bled. Consternation appeared in their countenances. As soon as I entered, they arose, and all surrounded me with eagerness. The Minister of Justice first addressed me. 'Are you,' said he, 'the Citizen Edgeworth de Firmont?' I replied that I was. 'Louis Capet,' continued the Minister, 'having express-'ed to us his desire to have you near 'him at his last moments, we have sent 'for you to know whether you consent 'to the service he requires of you.'— I replied, that since the King had signified his wishes, and named me, it became my duty to attend him. 'Then,' pursued the Minister, you will go with me 'to the Temple, whither I will con-'duct you.'—And immediately taking a bundle of papers from the table, whis-

pered a moment with the other Ministers, and going out in haste, ordered me to follow him. An escort of horse waited for us at the door with the Minister's carriage, into which I got, and he followed me. At this time all the Catholic clergy of Paris were dressed like other citizens, so that I was not in a clerical dress; but recollecting what I owed to the King, who had not been accustomed to such a costume, and to religion itself, which received for the first time a sort of homage from the new government, I thought I ought, on this occasion, to resume the exterior marks of my station; at least to make the attempt, appeared to me a duty. I mentioned it to the Minister before we quitted the Thuilleries; but he rejected my proposition,

in terms that prevented my further insisting upon it, though without using any offensive language towards me.

"Our drive to the Temple passed in gloomy silence. Two or three times, however, the Minister made an attempt to break it: he drew up the carriage windows, and exclaimed, 'Great God, 'with what a dreadful commission am 'I charged!' 'What a Man!' added he, speaking of the King. 'What re-'signation! what courage!—no!—hu-'man nature alone could not give such 'fortitude; he possesses something be-'yond it.'—Such expressions gave me an excellent opportunity for speaking some unwelcome truths; but I hesitated an instant what course I should pursue; for I reflected, that my first duty was to afford the King the reli-

gious consolations he had so earnestly desired; and that by giving vent to the indignation the conduct of my companion and his associates had inspired me with, I should probably be forbidden to approach my royal Master. I therefore resolved on absolute silence. The Minister seemed to comprehend my motives, and said not a word during the remainder of our drive. We arrived at the Temple, and the first gate was instantly opened to us; but when we reached the building which separates the court from the garden, we were stopped; and before we could proceed, it was necessary that the commissaries of the tower should come and examine us, and ascertain our business; even the Minister seemed subject to this form. We waited for the commissaries

near a quarter of an hour without speaking to each other, at last they appeared. One of them was a young man of about seventeen or eighteen, they saluted the minister as an acquaintance; he told them in a few words who I was, and the nature of my mission; they made a sign to me to follow them, and we all together crossed the garden to the tower. Here the scene became horrible beyond description: the door of the tower, though very narrow and very low, opened with a terrible noise, it was loaded with iron bolts and bars; we passed through a hall filled with guards, into a still larger hall, which appeared from its shape to have been once a chapel. There the commissaries of the commune, who had the custody of the King were assembled, I could not dis-

cover in their countenances that embarrassment or consternation which had struck me in the ministers. There were about twelve of them, mostly in the dress of jacobins.

"Their air, their manners, their sang-froid, all denoted them to be men of desperate minds, who did not shrink from the contemplation of the blackest crimes.

"But in justice, I ought to say, that this is not a portrait of them all; and I thought I could discover some, who had been induced from the weakness of their character to associate with the rest. Whatever might be their respective feelings, they were all taken indiscriminately by the minister into a corner of the apartment, where he read to them in a low voice, the papers which he had

brought from the Thuilleries. When he had done, he turned suddenly to me, and desired me to follow him, but this the council opposed by acclamation; again they assembled in the corner of the hall, deliberating some time in whispers; the result was, that one half of the assembly accompanied the Minister, who went up stairs to the King, while the other half remained to guard me. When the doors were carefully closed, the oldest of the commissaries approached me with a polite but embarrassed air, spoke of the terrible responsibility he was under, and begged a thousand pardons for the liberty he was obliged to take. I guessed that this preamble was to end in my being searched, so I anticipated him, by saying, that since the reputation of M. de Malesherbes could not excuse

him from this formality, I could not flatter myself that when I came to the Temple, an exception would be made in my favor. I assured him, that I had nothing about me that could be suspected, but added, that he was welcome to satisfy himself: notwithstanding this declaration, the search was made with rigour; my snuff box was opened, the snuff examined; and a little steel pencil case, which happened to be found in my pocket, was carefully inspected, to discover whether it concealed a poniard!

"They paid no attention to any papers I had about me, and finding every thing else unexceptionable, they renewed the excuses with which they had begun, and invited me to sit down; but I had scarcely done so, when two of the commissaries, who had gone up

to the King, came to tell me that I was allowed to see him. They conducted me by a winding staircase, which was so narrow that two persons could hardly pass each other; at certain intervals barriers were placed across the stairs, and at every barrier stood a sentinel; these men were actual *sans culottes*, and almost all drunk; the shouts they made, re-echoing through the vaults of the Temple, were quite horrible.

"When we reached the apartment of the King, all the doors of which were open, I perceived him in a group of eight or ten persons; it consisted of the Minister of Justice, accompanied by some Members of the Commune, who came to read to him the fatal decree, which *sentenced him to death on the following day*. He was calm, tranquil,

even with an aspect of benignity, while not one of those, who surrounded him, had an air of composure.

"As soon as he saw me, he waved his hand for them to retire, they obeyed in silence, he himself shut the door after them, and I found myself alone with my sovereign.

"Till this moment I had been able to command the various emotions with which I had been agitated; but at the sight of a prince, who had been once so great, and who was now so unfortunate, I was no longer master of myself, I could not restrain my tears, and I fell at his feet without the power of utterance. This touched him more than the decree, which he had just heard; he answered my tears only by his own; but soon resuming all his firmness,—

'Forgive me,' said the King, 'forgive 'me, sir, a moment's *weakness*, if such 'it can be called; for a long time I 'have lived among my enemies, and 'habit has in some degree familiarized 'me to them; but when I behold a 'faithful subject, this is to me a new 'sight, a different language reaches my 'heart, and in spite of my utmost efforts 'I am melted:'—saying these words, he kindly raised me from the ground, and led me into his closet, that he might speak more freely, for from his chamber all he said was over-heard. This closet or cabinet was built in one of the turrets of the Temple, it had neither hangings nor ornament, a bad stove served for a fire-place, and the only furniture was one table and three leathern chairs. There, making me sit down near him,

'Now, sir,' said he, 'the great busi-
'ness of my salvation is the only one
'which ought to occupy my thoughts.
'The only business of real importance!
'What are all other subjects compared to
'this? This must, however, be delayed
'for a few moments, because my family
'are coming to take leave of me for
'ever. In the mean time here is a
'paper that I wish you to read.' As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a sealed paper, and broke it open. It was his will, which he had made in the month of December, at a period when he was uncertain whether any religious assistance would be allowed to him in his last moments.

"All those who have read this paper, so interesting and so worthy of a Christian King, can easily judge of the deep

impression it must have made on me. But what most astonished me, was that the monarch had fortitude sufficient to read it himself, which he did nearly twice over. His voice was firm, and no change was to be seen in his countenance, except when he read names most dear to him—then all his tenderness was awakened, he was obliged to pause a moment, and his tears flowed notwithstanding his efforts to restrain them—but when he read passages that concerned himself alone, and that related only to his personal calamities, he seemed no more affected than if he had heard the misfortunes of an indifferent person related.

"Perceiving when he had finished reading, that the Royal Family were not coming, the King hastened to enquire

from me the state of his clergy and of the French church. Some things he had learned notwithstanding the rigour of his confinement; he knew in general that the French ecclesiastics had been obliged to fly their country, and had been received in London, but he was entirely ignorant of particulars. The little that I thought it my duty to tell him, seemed to make a great impression upon his Majesty's mind; he deplored the fate of his clergy, and he expressed the greatest admiration for the people of England, who had mitigated their sufferings. But he did not confine himself to these general enquiries, he entered into particulars that surprised me; he wished to know what had become of many of the clergy in whose welfare he took a peculiar interest. The Cardinal

de la Rochefoucault and the Bishop de Clermont, seemed to fix his attention, but his eagerness redoubled at the name of the Archbishop of Paris: he inquired where he was, what he was doing, and whether I had the power of corresponding with him:—'Tell him,' said the King, 'that I die in his communion, and 'that I never have acknowledged any 'pastor but him; alas! I am afraid he 'is offended at my not answering his 'last letter, I was then at the Thuilleries, 'but in fact my enemies kept so close 'to me at that period, that I had not 'time to write; at all events he has so 'much goodness of heart, that I am 'sure he will pardon me.' His Majesty spoke also of the Abbé Floriae, whom he had never seen; but he was well acquainted with the services which

this respectable divine had rendered to the diocese of Paris, in times of the greatest difficulty: his Majesty asked me, what had been his fate, and when I told him that he had had the good fortune to effect his escape, he spoke of him in terms which evinced the value he attached to his services, and the esteem in which he held his virtues. I don't know by what chance the conversation fell upon the Duke of Orleans; the King seemed to be well-acquainted with his intrigues, and with the horrid part he had taken at the convention, but he spoke of him without any bitterness, and with pity rather than with anger: 'What have I done to my Cousin,' he exclaimed, 'that he should so persecute 'me? What object could he have? Oh 'he is more to be pitied than I am!—

'my lot is melancholy no doubt, but 'his is much more so. No! I would 'not change with him!'

"This most interesting conversation was interrupted by one of the commissaries, who came to inform the King that his family were come down, and that he was at length permitted to see them. At these words he appeared extremely agitated, and he broke from me with precipitation. The interview took place, as well as I could judge, for I was not present at it, in a little room which was only separated by a glass-door from that which the commissaries occupied; so that they could see and hear all that past. Even I, though shut up in the cabinet where the King had left me, could easily distinguish their

voices, and I was involuntarily in some degree witness to the most touching scene I ever heard. It would be impossible for me to describe this agonizing interview; not only tears were shed, and sobs were heard, but piercing cries, which reached the outer court of the Temple. The King, the Queen, Monseigneur, the Dauphin, Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, all bewailed themselves at once, and their voices were confounded; at length their tears ceased, for their strength was exhausted: they then spoke in a low voice, and with some degree of tranquillity.

"The conversation lasted near an hour, and the King parted from his family, leaving them the hope of seeing him in the morning.

"He returned immediately to me, but in a state of agitation which shewed that he was wounded to the soul.

" ' Oh, sir!' cried he, throwing himself into a chair, 'what an interview have I ' gone through. Why should I love so ' tenderly, and why should I be so ten- ' derly beloved? But it is past! Let ' us forget every thing else to turn my ' thoughts to that alone which is now of ' importance—to that which should at ' this moment concentrate all my feelings.'

" He was continuing to speak in this manner, which shewed at once his sensibility and his courage, when Clery came to entreat him to take some refreshment. The King hesitated a moment, but after some reflection consented. The supper did not last more than five minutes, and the King retiring

into his closet, begged me to follow him. I had scarcely strength to rise, but the dread of giving him pain made me comply. One thought had strongly weighed upon my mind, since I had been so near the King. I determined to procure the means of administering the sacrament to his Majesty, at any risk to myself, since he had been so long deprived of the opportunity of receiving it. I should have brought the elements in secret with me, as we were obliged to do to all good Christians, who were detained in their own houses; but the strict search it was necessary to submit to in coming to the Temple, and the profanation which would infallibly have followed, were motives more than sufficient to have prevented me. There remained no other resource than for me

to say mass in the King's chamber, if I could find the means. I proposed it to him, but though he desired it most ardently, he seemed afraid of compromising my safety. I entreated him to give me his consent, promising that I would conduct myself with prudence and discretion. He at length yielded, 'Go, sir,' said he, 'but I very much 'fear you will not succeed, for I know 'the men, with whom you have to deal, 'they will grant nothing which they 'can refuse.' Fortified by this permission, I desired to be conducted to the hall of council, and there I made my demand in the name of the King. This proposal, for which the commissaries of the tower were not prepared, disconcerted them extremely, and they sought for different pretexts to elude it.

'How could they find a priest at that 'hour; and when they had got one, how 'obtain all that was necessary.' 'The 'priest is already found,' I replied, 'for 'I am he; and as for the rest, the nearest 'church will supply all that is neces- 'sary, if you will make the application. 'You will consider that my demand 'is just, and that it would be against 'your own principles to refuse me.' One of the commissaries instantly, though rather in guarded terms, insinuated that my request was only a snare; and that under the pretence of giving the communion to the King, I intended to poison him. 'History has 'furnished us with examples enough of 'this kind to make us circumspect,' said he. I looked steadily in the face of this man, and replied: '*The strict*

'*search I underwent as I came in here,*
'*ought to convince you that I do not*
'*carry poison. If then to-morrow any is*
'*found, it must be from you that I shall*
'*have received it;* all that I demand
'for the celebration of mass, must pass
'through your hands.'

"He would have replied, but the rest commanded him to be silent; and for a last subterfuge they said, that as the council was incomplete they could not decide upon any thing; but that they would go for the absent members, and then tell me the result of their deliberations.

"A quarter of an hour past, and I was again brought into their chamber, where the President thus addressed me, 'Citizen, minister of religion, the coun-'cil have taken into consideration the 'request that you have made, in the

'name of Louis Capet; and since they 'deem his request conformable to the 'law, which declares that all forms of 'worship are free, they consent to it; 'nevertheless we exact two conditions. 'The first, that you draw up instantly 'an address containing your demand, 'signed by yourself; and the second, 'that your religious ceremonies should 'be concluded by seven o'clock to-'morrow, at the latest; for at eight pre-'cisely, Louis Capet must set out for 'the place of execution.'

"These last words were said like all the rest, with a degree of cold blooded indifference, which characterised an atrocious mind.

"I put my request in writing, and left it on the table. They re-conducted me to the King, who awaited with anxiety

the conclusion of this affair. The summary account, which I gave him, in which I suppressed all particulars, pleased him extremely.

" It was now past ten o'clock, and I remained with the King till the night was far advanced; when perceiving that he was fatigued, I requested him to take some repose. He complied with his accustomed kindness, and charged me to lie down also. I went by his desire into a little closet which Clery occupied, which was separated from the King's chamber only by a thin partition; and whilst I was occupied by the most overwhelming thoughts, I heard the King tranquilly giving directions for the next day, after which he lay down on his bed.

" At five o'clock, he rose and dressed

as usual. Soon afterwards he sent for me, and I attended him for near an hour in the cabinet, where he had received me the evening before. When I retired, I found an altar completely prepared in the King's apartment, the commissaries had executed to the letter every thing that I had required of them: they had even done more than I had asked, I having only demanded what was indispensable.

" The King heard mass, he knelt on the ground without cushion or desk, he then received the sacrament, after which ceremony I left him for a short time at his prayers; he soon sent for me again, and I found him seated near his stove, where he could scarcely warm himself.

" ' My God,' said he, ' how happy I ' am in the possession of my religious

'principles! Without them, what should 'I now be? But with them, how sweet 'death appears to me. Yes, there 'dwells on high an incorruptible judge, 'from whom I shall receive the justice 'refused to me on earth.'

"The sacred offices I performed at this time, prevent my relating more than a few sentences, out of many interesting conversations which the King held with me, during the last sixteen hours of his life; but by the little that I have told, it may be seen how much might be added, if it were consistent with my duty to say more.

"Morning began to dawn, and the drums sounded in all the sections of Paris. An extraordinary movement was heard in the tower—it seemed to freeze the blood in my veins; but the King,

more calm than I was, after listening to it for a moment, said to me without emotion, 'Tis probably the national 'guard beginning to assemble.'

"In a short time detachments of cavalry entered the court of the Temple, and the voices of officers, and the trampling of horses, were distinctly heard. The King listened again, and said to me, with the same composure, 'They 'seem to be approaching.'

"On taking leave of the Queen, the evening before, he had promised to see her again next day, and he wished earnestly to keep his word, but I intreated him not to put the Queen to a trial under which she must sink; he hesitated a moment, and then, with an expression of profound grief, said, 'You 'are right, sir, it would kill her. I must

'deprive myself of this melancholy con-
'solation, and let her indulge in hope
'a few moments longer.'

"From seven o'clock till eight, various persons came frequently under different pretences to knock at the door of the cabinet, and each time I trembled lest it should be the last. But the King, with more firmness, rose without emotion, went to the door, and quietly answered the people who thus interrupted us. I do not know who these men were, but amongst them was one of the greatest monsters that the Revolution had produced; for I heard him say to his King, in a tone of mockery, I know not on what subject, 'Oh that was very well once, 'but you are now no longer King.' His Majesty did not reply a word, but returning to me, satisfied himself by

saying, ' See how these people treat ' me. But I know how to endure every ' thing.'

" Another time, after having answered one of the commissaries who came to interrupt us, he returned, and said with a smile, ' These people see poniards and ' poison every where, they fear that I ' shall destroy myself. Alas! they little ' know me, to kill myself would indeed ' be weakness. No! since it is neces- ' sary, I know how I ought to die. We heard another knock at the door—it was to be the last. It was Santerre and his crew. The King opened the door as usual. They announced to him (I could not hear in what terms,) that he must prepare for death. ' *I am oc-* ' *cupied,*' said he, with an air of authority, ' wait for me. In a few minutes I will

'return to you.' Then having shut the door, he kneeled at my feet. 'It is finished, sir,' said he, 'give me your 'last benediction, and pray that it may 'please God to support me to the end.' He soon arose, and leaving the cabinet, advanced towards the wretches who were in his bed-chamber. Their countenances were embarrassed, yet their hats were not taken off, and the King perceiving it, asked for his own. Whilst Clery, bathed in tears, ran for it, the King said, 'Are there amongst you 'any Members of the Commune? I 'charge them to take care of this paper!' It was his will. One of the party took it from the King. 'I recommend also 'to the Commune, Clery, my valet de 'chamber. I can do no more than con-'gratulate myself in having had his

'services. They will give him my watch 'and clothes; not only those I have here, 'but those that have been deposited at 'the Commune. I also desire, that in 'return for the attachment he has shewn 'me, he may be allowed to enter into '*the Queen's*—into *my wife's* service:' he used both expressions. No one answering, the King cried out in a firm tone, '*Let us proceed,*' at which words they all moved on; the King crossed the first court, formerly the garden, on foot: he turned back one or twice towards the tower, as if to bid adieu to all most dear to him on earth; and by his gestures it was plain that he was then trying to collect all his strength and firmness. At the entrance of the second court, a carriage waited, two gend'armes held the door: at the King's

approach one of these men entered first, and placed himself in front, the King followed and placed me by his side;* at the back of the carriage, the other gend'arme jumped in last, and shut the door.

" It is said that one of these men was a priest in disguise; for the honor of religion I hope that this may be false. It is also said, that they had orders to assassinate the King on the smallest murmur from the people; I do not know whether this might have been their design, but it seems to me, that unless they possessed other arms than those that ap-

Note by the Editor.

* The Abbé Edgeworth has here, with admirable modesty, omitted, what his private letters to his brother mention, that Louis the Sixteenth thought that the attendance of his Confessor had closed when he quitted the Temple, and was equally astonished and consoled by his accompanying him to the place of execution.

peared, it would have been difficult to accomplish their purpose; for their muskets only were visible, which it would have been impossible for them to have used. These apprehended murmurs were not imaginary, a great number of people devoted to the King had resolved on tearing him from the hands of his guards, or at least on making the attempt. Two of the principal actors, young men whose names are well known, found means to inform me the night before of their intentions; and though my hopes were not sanguine, I yet did not despair of rescue, even at the foot of the scaffold. I have since heard, that the orders for this dreadful morning had been planned with so much art, and executed with so much precision, that of four or five hundred people, thus de-

voted to their prince, twenty-five only succeeded in reaching the place of rendez-vous. In consequence of the measures taken before day-break in all the streets of Paris, none of the rest were able to get out of their houses.

" The King finding himself seated in the carriage, where he could neither speak to me or be spoken to without witness, kept a profound silence. I presented him with my breviary, the only book I had with me, and he seemed to accept it with pleasure: he appeared anxious that I should point out to him the psalms that were most suited to his situation, and he recited them attentively with me. The gend'armes, without speaking, seemed astonished and confounded at the tranquil piety of their

monarch, to whom they doubtless never had before approached so near.

"The procession lasted almost two hours, the streets were lined with citizens, all armed, some with pikes and some with guns, and the carriage was surrounded by a body of troops, formed of the most desperate people of Paris. As another precaution, they had placed before the horses a great number of drums, intended to drown any noise or murmur in favor of the King; but how could they be heard, nobody appeared either at the doors or windows, and in the street nothing was to be seen but armed citizens. Citizens, all rushing towards the commission of a crime," which perhaps they detested in their hearts.

"The carriage proceeded thus in silence to the Place de Louis XV. and stopped in the middle of a large space that had been left round the scaffold; this space was surrounded with cannon, and beyond, an armed multitude extended as far as the eye could reach. As soon as the King perceived that the carriage stopped, he turned and whispered to me, 'We are arrived, if I mistake not.' My silence answered that we were. One of the guards came to open the carriage door, and the gensd'armes would have jumped out, but the King stopped them, and leaning his arm on my knee, 'Gentlemen,' said he, with the tone of majesty, 'I recommend to you 'this *good* man, take care that after my 'death no insult be offered to him,—I 'charge you to prevent it.' The two

men answered not a word, the King was continuing in a louder tone, but one of them stopped him, saying, ' Yes, ' yes, we will take care. Leave him to ' us;'—and I ought to add, that these words were spoken in a tone of voice which must have overwhelmed me, if at such a moment it had been possible for me to have thought of myself. As soon as the King had left the carriage, three guards surrounded him, and would have taken off his clothes, but he repulsed them with haughtiness; he undressed himself, untied his neckcloth, opened his shirt, and arranged it himself. The guards, whom the determined countenance of the King had for a moment disconcerted, seemed to recover their audacity. They surrounded him again, and would have seized his hands.

'What are you attempting?' said the King, drawing back his hands. 'To bind you,' answered the wretches. 'To 'bind *me*,' said the King, with an indignant air, 'No! I shall never consent 'to that, do what you have been ordered, but you shall never bind me.' The guards insisted, they raised their voices, and seemed to wish to call on others to assist them.

"Perhaps this was the most terrible moment of this most dreadful morning; another instant, and the best of Kings would have received from his rebellious subjects, indignities too horrid to mention—indignities that would have been to him more insupportable than death. Such was the feeling expressed on his countenance. Turning towards me, he looked at me steadily, as if to ask my ad-

vice. Alas! it was impossible for me to give any, and I only answered by silence; but as he continued this fixed look of enquiry, I replied, 'Sire, in this new insult, 'I only see another trait of resemblance 'between your Majesty and the Saviour 'who is about to recompence you.' At these words he raised his eyes to heaven, with an expression that can never be described. 'You are right,' said he, 'nothing less than his example should 'make me submit to such a degradation.' Then turning to the guards, 'Do what 'you will, I will drink of the cup even 'to the dregs.'

"The path leading to the scaffold was extremely rough and difficult to pass, the King was obliged to lean on my arm, and from the slowness with which he proceeded, I feared for a moment that

his courage might fail; but what was my astonishment, when arrived at the last step, I felt that he suddenly let go my arm, and I saw him cross with a firm foot the breadth of the whole scaffold; silence, by his look alone, fifteen or twenty drums that were placed opposite to him; and in a voice so loud, that it must have been heard at the Pont Tournant, I heard him pronounce distinctly these memorable words. '*I die* '*innocent of all the crimes laid to my* '*charge; I pardon those who have oc-* '*casioned my death; and I pray to God,* '*that the blood you are now going to* '*shed may never be visited on France.*'

"He was proceeding, when a man on horseback, in the national uniform, waved his sword, and with a ferocious cry,

ordered the drums to beat. Many voices were at the same time heard encouraging the executioners. They seemed reanimated themselves, and seizing with violence the most virtuous of Kings, they dragged him under the axe of the guillotine, which with one stroke severed his head from his body. All this passed in a moment. The youngest of the guards, who seemed about eighteen, immediately seized the head, and shewed it to the people as he walked round the scaffold; he accompanied this monstrous ceremony with the most atrocious and indecent gestures. At first an awful silence prevailed; at length some cries of '*Vive la Republique!*' were heard. By degrees the voices multiplied, and in less than ten minutes this

cry, a thousand times repeated, became the universal shout of the multitude, and every hat was in the air."

It is remarkable, that in this account of the last moments of Louis the Sixteenth, the Abbé Edgeworth has omitted to relate that fine apostrophe, which every body has heard, and which every body believes that he addressed to his King, at the moment of execution,

"*Fils de St. Louis montez au ciel!*"

The Abbé Edgeworth has been asked if he recollected to have made this exclamation. He replied, that he could neither deny nor affirm that he had spoken the words. It was possible, he added, that he might have pronounced

them without afterwards recollecting the fact, for that he retained no memory of any thing that happened relative to *himself* at that awful instant. His not recollecting or recording the words, is, perhaps, the best proof that they were spoken from the impulse of the moment.

With characteristic modesty and propriety of feeling, the Abbé closes his narrative at the death of the King. The reader, however, will be anxious to know how he escaped from the imminent peril of his situation; left at the foot of the scaffold—a priest—the confessor of the King—surrounded by a mob of regicides and atheists. Of this miraculous escape we have an account in the following letter, from the Abbé to his brother.

In the beginning of this letter, the

reader will pardon some recapitulation of what he already knows; it was thought best not to attempt to garble it, but to leave it in its genuine state. It is written with such simplicity and pathos, that it can scarcely fail to interest the public; and it teaches the excellent lesson, that a steady adherence to duty, a courage that faces danger, and a firm reliance on Providence, are the surest preservatives of life and character.

LETTER FROM THE ABBÉ EDGEWORTH TO HIS BROTHER USSHER EDGEWORTH.

Written originally in English.

"*London*, 1*st Sept.* 1796.

"I am sure my dear Ussher will be agreeably surprised to hear I have at

last escaped from France, and am now safe landed on British ground. My dismal story during these four last years, will no doubt be a matter of some curiosity for him; but were I to write it at large, a volume would hardly suffice; the outlines thereof, is therefore all he can expect from me to day, and to them I shall confine myself, until, in happier times, I can give him my history at large.

" To begin with what gave rise to all, I must tell you (what perhaps you have never known) that hazard, if hazard be not an empty word, brought me acquainted a few years ago, with Madam Elizabeth of France, one of the most accomplished and (I really do believe) without exception, the most virtuous Princess then existing in Europe.—Though a foreigner, and in every respect

little entitled to the honor of her acquaintance, I soon became a friend, and she placed an unbounded confidence in me; still I was neither personally known to either the King or Queen, they were indeed no strangers to my name, and in these latter times, often expressed their astonishment, upon hearing how freely I resorted to the Palace, whilst round about all was terror and woe. The fact is, that I never apprehended the danger to be what it really was; and whilst no clergyman dared to appear at Court, if not completely disguised, I went there in open day, once or twice every week, without ever changing my dress. Indeed, when I turn my thoughts upon these shocking times, I am amazed to have been so bold, but Providence, I suppose, blinded me on purpose; and

in reality, though my presence always occasioned a little bustle amongst the guards, I never received any insult from them. Thus I continued until the eve of the fatal day, on which the Royal Family was arrested; for the 9th of August, 1792, (I remember it well,) Madam Elizabeth desired to see me, and I spent a good part of the morning in her closet, little aware of the scene of horror that was preparing for the tenth. I shall give no account of the cruel manner in which the royal family were treated on the occasion, as I suppose those public facts are well known to you; and for the present must restrain my narration to what regards myself. Hitherto the revolution had in some measure respected me, and though deeply affected by the misfortunes of

my friends, my person and little property still remained untouched; but I soon had my turn, and a woeful one it was indeed. No sooner had the King been transferred from the Convention-Hall to the Temple, but my house, Rue du Bacq, was broke open at midnight, by an armed gang, of forty or fifty men. I was fast asleep, and the room I occupied lying far from the street, they were already within doors before I awoke; but as they advanced, breaking down whatever opposed their passage, I started from my rest; and concluding, from the horrid noise with which my ears were struck, that my last hour was come, I really had no other thought, but that of recommending my soul to God, and preparing for death. Upon reflection, however, I

thought it better to face the danger, than to be murdered in my bed. I therefore flew to my door, before it was broken down, and on opening it, the first object I perceived was a dozen of villains holding torches in their hands, and armed with every instrument of death; a kind of officer seemed to be at their head, and to him I walked up, demanding with more assurance than I really had, what was the meaning of all this noise, at such a time of night: he looked at me in the face with an insolence not to be described, and after viewing me a few minutes, 'you are not the person,' said he.

"But soon after, as if he repented to have relieved my mind by these words, he came up to me again, and rushing into my room, he demanded to see my

papers. This proposal was a thunderbolt to me, for I had papers of some importance, and many of them, if too nicely viewed, might have brought me to the block; however, I affected sincerity, and as the number was too great to be examined in one night, I took care to cast in his way either insignificant pieces, or pieces which I supposed he would scarcely understand. This labour puzzled him vastly, and soon losing patience, he concluded I was not the person whom he was charged to arrest; but resolving not to quit the house without a capture, he turned to a friend of mine, who lodged under the same roof, and finding on the table a letter he had just received from Germany, in which there happened to be a few suspicious words, he hurried him

away to prison, where he was murdered a few days after, without any form of trial.

" This horrid catastrophe, convincing me more and more, that the most innocent papers, might become fatal to their possessor, I resolved to sacrifice all those I had in my possession, though many of them were dear to me, and of real importance. Two days were spent in this painful task, and happy I was to have had the thought, for they were scarcely burned, when my house was assaulted a second time, but at mid-day, and with all the form of a regular pursuit, one hundred men at least were employed on this occasion; my papers were searched with a far more attentive eye than before. The inquest lasted until three o'clock in the morning, but all

suspicious pieces being destroyed, and no charge appearing against me, I was once more restored to peace. I cannot, however, but recollect with gratitude, a singular instance of the protection of God, which I received on the occasion; for, notwithstanding all my care to destroy whatever papers could bring suspicions on me, a letter, just received from the agent of Monsieur (now Louis XVIII.), had escaped my notice. It betrayed in very clear terms all my connexions with the court. The villains had it in their hands; but being fatigued, did not think of giving it a glance. I myself was unaware of its existence; but meeting it a few days after, and calling to mind in whose possession it had been, all my blood chilled in my veins, and I could not but acknowledge

with gratitude on this, though seemingly insignificant occurrence, the hand of all-ruling Providence.

"These, and many other incidents of less moment, which I have not time to relate, happened from the 10th of August to the 2d of September, when a new scene of horror took place; but as I suppose you have read the history of these sanguinary days, I shall here abstain from unnecessary details, and confine my pen to what regards myself: suffice it therefore to say, that as soon as I heard the fire-bells,* by which the massacre was solemnly announced, and the uproar it occasioned in the town, a faithful servant was dispatched, to know what could be the cause thereof. The poor boy came back, half dead with

* Tocsin.

fright, informing me that the neighbouring prison (formerly a church, St. Sulpice) was broken open by the mob; that the prisoners, numbers of whom were my intimate friends, had already lost their lives; that the butchery was still going on; and that as soon as the assassins should have finished there, their intention was to come up to my house, Rue du Bacq. This indeed was distressing news; for the streets being crowded, and I well known by all, it was no easy matter to escape: however, as there was no time to lose, I instantly quitted my usual dress, and disguised as well as I could, I resolved to make an attempt to get off. This attempt succeeded beyond all my expectations. Not a soul appeared to take notice of me as I passed, and I was happy

enough to gain my mother's lodging, where I lay concealed during a few weeks.

" But an idle report, whispered about at first, and, unfortunately for me, soon afterwards published in a journal, obliged me to quit my new abode, and seek for shelter in some more distant place. The story was, that M. L'Abbé de Firmont (for under this name I was commonly known in Paris) had taken party among the national guards, and profiting of his new disguise, found means to introduce himself into the Temple, where he had frequent conferences with Madame Elizabeth, and of course with the King himself. I am confident that this incoherent story was not believed by one single man of sense; but the suspicion alone was treason;

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and the friends of the Royal Family, as well as my own, fearing the consequences, engaged me to leave Paris for a while, in order to discredit the report. I retired to Choisy, a small village, nine miles off.

"Here I lay, completely unknown, under the name of Edgeworth, and reputed an English gentleman, of small fortune, of quiet dispositions, and retired from Paris in quest of peace. But I had not long been in this kind of solitude, when the Archbishop of Paris, obliged to fly from his diocese, vested me with all his powers, and charged me with the government of his flock; an awful trust, at any time, indeed; but, in the horrid confusion that now prevailed, a trust far beyond my capacity or strength. However, I deemed it a

duty to comply; and from that day, all my thoughts were bent upon returning to Paris. As I was debating in my own mind the different measures that should be taken, in order to discharge this office with as little danger as possible for myself, I was called upon to execute a still more awful trust.

"The unfortunate Louis XVI. foreseeing to what lengths the malice of his enemies was likely to go, and resolved to be prepared at all events, cast his eyes upon me, to assist him in his last moments, if condemned to die. He would not make any application to the ruling party, nor even mention my name without my consent. The message he sent me was touching beyond expression, and worded in a manner which I never shall forget. A King, though in

chains, had a right to command; but he commanded not. My attendance was requested merely *as a pledge of my attachment for him—as a favour, which he hoped I would not refuse. But as the service was likely to be attended with some danger for me, he dared not to insist, and only prayed (in case I deemed the danger to be too great) to point out to him a clergyman worthy of his confidence, but less known than I was myself, leaving the person absolutely to my choice.*

"This message, as you may believe, gave me more cause for reflection than any message I had received in my life. The general opinion was, that the clergyman called to that awful ministry would not survive his prince; and it must be allowed, that the horrid policy,

which prevailed at that time, made this opinion probable. However, as far as I can judge, this consideration was that which preyed least upon my mind; and, if I do not delude myself, I was perfectly resigned to my fate; but the confusion in which I saw the largest diocese of France, now committed to my care, was a consideration of far greater weight with me, as I clearly saw myself lost for it, whether I survived the King or not. Being obliged to take my party upon the spot, I resolved to comply with what appeared to be at that moment the call of Almighty God; and committing to his providence all the rest, I made answer to the most unfortunate of Kings, that whether he lived or died, I would be his friend to the last.

" As soon as I had given the final answer, I received orders to remain in Paris, and not to stir out of my house until I saw what turn affairs would take. Many days elapsed, and I leave you to judge in what tortures of mind they were spent: however, I profited of them to put my affairs in order, to make my will, and to provide as well as I could for the diocese, in case of my death: but the greatest difficulty was how to conceal all those dispositions from my mother and sister, with whom I then had taken up my abode. Having no better hiding place in Paris than a corner of their small apartment, where I took my meals, received crowds, and slept, thus I continued involved in business and anxiety until the 20th of January, when I received a note from the

Executive Council, worded as follows:

'Le Conseil Executif Provisoire 'ayant une affaire de la plus haute im- 'portance à communiquer au Citoyen 'Edgeworth de Firmont, l'invite à pas- 'ser, sans perdre un instant, au lieu de 'ses séances, &c.'

'The Provisionary Executive Coun- 'cil having an affair of the highest im- 'portance to communicate to Citizen 'Edgeworth de Firmont, requests him 'to attend, without delay, the place of 'their sittings.'

"It was five o'clock in the afternoon, and a coach was waiting at my door; but as I knew my poor mother would be alarmed to see me go out at that time of the night, whilst all was clangour in the streets, I sent immediately

for an intimate friend of her's, and trusted her with my secret, requesting of her to keep it until she had news of me; and I desired her to tell my mother, in the mean time, that I had been suddenly called upon to assist a dying person, and could not come home until morning. This quieted her completely; but my sister was no dupe. '*Oh!*' said she to her friend, '*the dying* '*person is the King.* '*I always appre-* '*hended this moment for my brother; he* '*is lost for me! but his duty is to go,* '*and I must resign myself to my fate.*'

"Here, my dear Ussher, you will undoubtedly expect a full account of the most melancholy day that France ever saw, and of the dismal night that preceded it; but part of this account, I suppose, is well known to you; and

what still remains unpublished, I cannot commit to paper until I have seen the unfortunate remains of the Bourbon family, with whom I have never corresponded since. As soon as I have paid my duty to them, you shall be certainly the first informed, and see, perhaps, with astonishment, in the unfortunate Louis XVI., a prince, who, with every virtue, had but one fault, that of thinking too well of others, whilst he refused common justice to himself.

" But to resume my private history, for that alone is what I mean to write, you will undoubtedly be curious to know by what fortunate circumstance I escaped the danger, which both friends and foes apprehended, on this occasion for my life. To this, the only answer I

can give is, that I really know it not. All I can say is, that as soon as the fatal blow was given, I fell upon my knees, and thus remained until the vile wretch, who had acted the principal part in this horrid tragedy, came with shouts of joy, shewing the bleeding head to the mob, and sprinkling me with the blood that streamed from it: then, indeed, I thought it time to quit the scaffold; but casting my eyes round about, I saw myself invested by twenty or thirty thousand men in arms, and to pierce the crowd seemed to me a foolish attempt: however, as I must take that part, or by remaining, appear to share the public joy, my only resource was to recommend myself to God, and turn my course towards the side on which the ranks seemed to have least depth.

All eyes were fixed upon me, as you may believe; but as soon as I reached the first line, to my great astonishment, no resistance was made; the second line opened in the same manner; and when I got to the fourth or fifth, my coat being a common surtout, (for I was not permitted, on this occasion, to wear any exterior marks of a priest), I was absolutely lost in the crowd, and no more noticed than if I had been a simple spectator of a scene, which for ever will dishonour France.

" My first thought, upon finding myself alive and free, was to go in all speed to M. de Malesherbes, for whom the King had given me a most important message. I found the unfortunate old man bathed in tears. The account I gave him did not serve, as you may

believe, to wipe them away. But soon forgetting his own misfortunes, to rescue me, if possible, from those which he deemed to be still impending over me, '*Fly*,' says he to me, '*fly, my dear Sir,* '*from this land of horror, and from the* '*tigers that are now let loose in it.* *No,* '*they never will pardon the attachment* '*you have professed for the most unfor-* '*tunate of Kings; and what you have* '*done this morning, is a crime which,* '*sooner or later, they will revenge.* *I* '*myself, though less exposed to their* '*fury than you are, intend going, with-* '*out delay, to my house in the country;* '*but you, my dear Sir, it is not Paris* '*alone, but France itself you must leave.* '*For you I do not see a safe spot in it.*'

"This was undoubtedly the advice of friendship and foresight; but three

powerful considerations made me deaf to this proposal:—The diocese, to which I owed myself, as long as it was possible to hold my ground in it; Madame Elizabeth, with whom, notwithstanding her close confinement, I corresponded from time to time, and whom I had promised never to forsake; and, lastly, the King himself, who had given me some commissions of great importance, which it was impossible for me to execute if not in France. Hence, thinking I could reconcile all duties by absconding for a time, I wrote a note to my sister, informing her that I was alive; and as soon as it was duskish, I got into a carriage, and retired in great secrecy to a friend's, three leagues off. This friend, whose name must be no longer a secret for you, since to him

your brother owes his life, was the Baron de Lezardiere, a nobleman of unspotted character, advanced in years, and then living in opulence. He not only received me with open arms, but slighting all the dangers to which he exposed himself and family, by giving shelter to such a guest, he insisted upon my looking on his house as my own, and seeking out for no other place of refuge. There I received, during three months, every attention that the most delicate friendship could invent; and though the family was large, and the servants numerous, my existence was hardly perceived out of doors, so well the secret was kept.

"I had not been long in this charming solitude, when I received information from Paris that my head was de-

manded in three different clubs, and especially at the Jacobins', as the only atonement equal to my guilt, for having openly professed my attachment for the dying tyrant, &c. This was alarming news indeed; but a gazetteer (friend or foe, I know not) having published, a few days after, that I had got safe over to England, and there had frequent conferences, not only with the principal emigrants, but with Mr. Pitt himself, this idle story was credited by all, and I was completely forgotten.

"However, the fiction, though favourable to me in one sense, distressed me much in other respects, as it obliged me to conceal myself more cautiously than ever; for had I been discovered in France after such a report, I must have been, in the eyes of government, no less

than an emissary from the court of England, an agent to the emigrants, and an emigrant myself—all titles that made my case the blacker, by adding to my former guilt. Hence I was obliged to keep within doors more than ever; nor could I venture out to Paris but by night. There I dared not to remain more than a day or two at a time; and though my house should have been open to all, since to all I owed myself, few people knew where it was, or how to get admittance into it. It is true, that from my solitude in the country, I entertained a large correspondence with the town; but all kind of business could not be transacted by letters; and I soon perceived, that the diocese committed to my care, far from prospering in my

hands, suffered materially from my absence.

"In this distressing situation, and really not knowing what part to take, I wrote a long letter to the Archbishop, informing him of all, and demanding his advice; but, unfortunately for me, my letter, though directed to one of the commanding officers upon the frontier (who favoured under-hand my correspondence), was seized, opened, and sent back to the *Comité de Salut Public.* Soon after, the house of M. de Lezardiere, where I lay concealed, was assaulted in mid-day; and the whole family, supposing the storm to be directed against me alone, fell at my knees, requesting I would provide for my own safety, by a timely flight. I yielded,

though indeed with some reluctance, to their entreaties; and casting into the fire all my papers, I escaped by a back road into the fields, where I remained until it was dark. But how bitter was my grief, when coming back at night, I was informed that my valuable friend had been carried off to prison, with his youngest son and eldest daughter; and that upon the road to Paris, three different times, the blood-thirsty gang had held council, whether it was not best to shorten the business, by murdering them upon the spot. My mind was relieved a few days after (at least in some degree), by the positive assurances given me, that amongst the questions put to the three prisoners, upon their arrival in Paris, not a word had been said about me; which clearly

proved that I had not been the innocent cause of their misfortune; but my friend was not the less in danger (for prison and death now began to be synonymous terms in France), and my papers were lost for ever.

"This accident did not prove fatal to M. de Lezardiere; for after ten days confinement, he was dismissed. As to my papers, those I regret the most, and shall, in all probability, ever lament, were the letters written to me from the Temple, by Madame Elizabeth. I have already hinted to you (but this to you, and no other mortal, as the time for revealing is not yet come), that notwithstanding the unrelenting vigilance of her guardians, this unfortunate Princess found means to correspond with me from time to time, and to take

my advice on many critical occurrences during her imprisonment. These letters were conveyed to me in a ball of silk, and all measures so prudently taken, that the correspondence, though at last suspected, was never found out entirely. I had already destroyed, in one of my critical moments, all those she had written to me upon different subjects before her confinement; nor was I sensible of the loss, as she was still alive to repair it; but when I now reflect that she is no more, and that her last pages, bathed with her tears, and painting in so lively colours her resignation and her courage, are now lost for posterity, I cannot but lament it as a public misfortune.

"But to return to my subject, the

poor officer, who had favoured my correspondence with the Archbishop of Paris, was soon called to an account for the anonymous letter that had been put into the post under his cover; and the affair being likely to take a very serious turn, not indeed for him, as he could plead ignorance of the contents, but for the author, whose existence in France could be no longer doubted, all my friends joined in requesting I would retire, without delay, to some remote province. I had only time to see my poor mother, whom I embraced for the last time, and to provide, as well as the circumstances would permit, for the government of the diocese. These two duties fulfilled, I got into a carriage, and, under the name of Essex, I got off

to Montigny, where M. le Comte de Roche-Chouart received me with the greatest kindness in his castle.

"Here my first business was to write to the faithful agent of Madame Elizabeth, giving her at full length my direction, in case she had any silk balls to send me. This letter was directed to her house, and signed Essex; but no sooner was it put into the post-office, than I was informed, that the very person to whom I wrote had been arrested a few days after I had left Paris, *for favouring a clandestine correspondence of one of the royal prisoners;* and also, that a friend of mine, being cited before the Comité de Salut Public, and questioned about the letter I had written to the Archbishop, had inadvertently discovered the name under which I was

endeavouring to conceal my existence. This was fatal indeed; for the letter I had just cast into the post-office being directed to a prisoner, must of course go to the Comité de Salut Public; and there the Comité found, without farther inquiry, not only my hand-writing, to compare it with that of the anonymous letter written to the Archbishop, but my name full at length, and every means of discovering me, given by myself. I leave you to judge, my dear Ussher, into what perplexity I was cast by this accident. But Providence looked down upon my distress; and after a whole week spent in the most cruel anxiety, I at last had news from the person herself, informing me that the affair had been hushed up, and that my letter had got safe.

"I pass over in silence many incidents of less importance, which I met with during the four months I spent with M. de Roche Chouart; I must now relate the circumstance which obliged me to fly, and to seek for safer concealment. The Comité de Salut Public having got hold of the name under which I concealed myself in France, caused an article, relative to I know not what correspondence, supposed to have existed between Louis XVI. and the King of Prussia; to be inserted in the public papers. The article was insignificant in itself; but the author, in order to obtain more credit for his story, took care to tell the public, that he was indebted for the anecdote to '*Mr. Essex, the last friend to Louis* '*XVI.* Mr. Essex, a person who must

'have been informed of all that had 'passed:' this paper came to Montigny, where I was publicly known; and was then reputed to be an English gentleman of small fortune, travelling for his private business, or for his health; but this resemblance of names, and I know not what in my person, when nicely viewed, that betrayed a clergyman, soon gave rise to other thoughts. During the first days, I paid but little attention to what was whispered about, hoping that the author and the anecdote would be soon forgotten; but as I was thus endeavouring to tranquillize myself, a man advanced in years, and of most noble appearance, came up to the Castle, and enquired for Mr. Essex: he was introduced, and all witnesses being removed, he said, '*Sir, your existence*

*'in this house is no secret to the public,
'nor has it hitherto occasioned the least
'suspicion, as you had been supposed to
'be a man of no importance; but a para-
'graph inserted lately in the papers, is
'now the subject of all conversation,
'and all eyes in the neighbourhood are
'fixed upon you. Be so good as to read
'the article, and if in it you behold your
'own features; oh! my dear sir, give
'leave to a man, who was your friend,
'before he had the honour of seeing you,
'to request of you to provide for your own
'safety, by a timely flight, for here you
'will be infallibly arrested.'*

"This unexpected visit gave me, as you may believe, much alarm. I thanked the gentleman in the warmest terms; and after holding council with the few friends I had made, in that part of

France, it was unanimously resolved, that I must fly with all speed, and seek for shelter in some other place. I pitched upon Fontainbleau, as one of the quietest spots in France; there I had neither friends nor acquaintances except a lady, whom I had never seen but once. Apprized of my arrival, she flew to my assistance; her credit, her purse, her servants, all was at my disposal; and my own mother could not have done more for me, than she did during my stay in that place; but unfortunately it was not long, for an order was issued to arrest all foreigners, and for me arrestation was certain death. I therefore, was obliged once more to seek for safety in some other spot. The Baron de Lezardiere, who never lost sight of me amidst my distresses, had an old ser-

vant, a man of uncommon resolution and prudence; him he dispatched to protect me in my flight. We both fell into the hands of an armed troop, appointed to examine all travellers, and to take up all those whom they might suspect; but the fierce and bold countenance of my companion got me off; and thanks to his zeal, I arrived without accident at Bayeux, in Normandy, two hundred miles from Paris.

" Here I had it in my power to get off to England, as the coasts were but ill guarded. But Madame Elizabeth was still alive, and if she should be exposed to danger, I was resolved to keep my word, and to be her friend to the last, let the consequences be what they would for myself. Hence I stopped at Bayeux, and took up my lodging in

a poor hut, where I lay unnoticed; nobody suspecting that a man of any importance, could be lodged in so dismal a place. Soon after the Baron de Lezardiere, hunted from town to town, came to join me in this hole, with his three daughters and his younger son, and there we remained eighteen months, almost forgotten. He was still in opulence, when he arrived; but his Castle being burned to the ground, all his lands seized, and most of his friends destroyed by the guillotine, he soon fell into poverty, and I became his only resource. My friends, that were numerous, and some of them still wealthy, seeing me in this situation, came on all sides to my assistance; and with the supplies I received from them, (without my ever asking,) and the little I received from

you, I have had the happiness to maintain, not indeed in opulence, but still above want, one of the most respectable families in France.

"Our solitude indeed was daily bathed with our tears (though otherwise comfortable enough); for there my poor Baron, after the loss of all he possessed in this world, was apprized of the death of his two sons, young men of the greatest merit (a third had been murdered in the prisons of Paris, and the fourth is actually under trial for his life); soon after he received the shocking news of his four sisters being shot, on the same day, as they were flying in the fields to avoid something worse. On my side, it was in the same solitude that I received the fatal news of my poor mother being arrested, and of her soon sinking under

her grief; that my sister was torn from her, and conducted from prison to prison, partly on my account: in short, that Madame Elizabeth, the glory of religion, and the idol of France, had fallen a victim to the cruel policy of our tyrants, at the moment I expected it the least. I must confess that this last blow went to my very heart, almost as much as the loss of my dear mother; for I was in France merely on her account, and resolved to fly to her assistance any day or hour she called upon me; but she was no more, when I first heard of her being taken from the Temple. Only sixteen hours elapsed between her being brought to judgment and her death; and my only consolation ever since is to think, that, had I been in Paris, I could not have been of any service to her, as no-

body even suspected on that day, that she was in the fatal cart.

"No sooner had I been informed of her death, than I resolved to leave France. It was now a duty to fly, as it had been one to remain as long as she was in existence; for a few days before her imprisonment, she had entrusted me with her last will, (by word of mouth) and requested I would execute it *in person*, whenever I should hear of her death: it is to execute this duty that I am now in London; and as soon as I close this letter, I set off for Edinburgh."

The Abbé set out immediately on his journey to Edinburgh, to execute the commands of the Princess Elizabeth;

to communicate to *Monsieur*, (the present King of France) her last wishes, with which, *by word of mouth*, as he states, he had been entrusted by the Princess. The Abbé Edgeworth staid about a week at Edinburgh, and then returned to London, in the month of September, 1796. Soon after his return, Mr. Pitt, desiring to see him; he had a long interview with this Minister, at Lord Liverpool's office. When the conference was concluded, Mr. Pitt informed him, that his Majesty intended to settle a pension upon him for life. The Abbé Edgeworth expressed his gratitude for the intended honour. But, the next day, he wrote to Lord Liverpool, and in terms the most polite and grateful, begged to decline accepting the pension that had been so graciously of-

fered to him. " He could not think of " adding," he said, " to the expenses " which government had already in- " curred, in providing for such a number " of French emigrants."

During three months which the Abbé Edgeworth spent, at this time, in London, he received marks of high respect and of the kindest attention, from persons of the most distinguished character in England; and from all classes, he had proofs of the genuine good and generous feeling of the British public. The polished, yet simple, manners of the Abbé Edgeworth, now attached to his person, those who had begun by admiring his character. It became the fashion to invite him every-where; and such indeed was the general eagerness to see and hear him, that had he com-

plied with this desire, he must have lived in public; and had he felt within him any latent love of celebrity or of popular applause, it would now have appeared, and would have been fully gratified. But he had no love of fame, he withdrew as much as possible from notice, and lived in retirement with a few private friends.

His brother and his other relations in Ireland, were most anxious to see him, and to welcome to their country and to their family, one who had conferred on them so much honour. The Abbé, in compliance with their entreaties, was preparing, and actually on the point of setting out upon his journey to Ireland, when he was stopped, and all his views were altered by the arrival of Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere from France,

who was charged with dispatches of importance for Louis the Eighteenth. Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere had undertaken to deliver the papers to her brother, who was to carry them to the King of France; his Majesty was at this time at Blanckenberg. It happened that M. de la Lezardiere had left London, and had gone on other business to his Majesty. Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere, therefore, applied to the Abbé Edgeworth, as the only person whom she could venture to entrust with a confidential commission of so much importance. Had the Abbé hesitated, he would have been decided by a message delivered to him, with the following letter from his king.

LETTER FROM LOUIS THE EIGHTEENTH TO THE ABBÉ EDGEWORTH.

" I have heard, Sir, with extreme satisfaction, that you have at last escaped from all the dangers to which your devoted attachment to my brother has exposed you. I sincerely thank Divine Providence for having preserved in you one of his most faithful ministers, and the trusty friend who received the last thoughts of a brother, whose death I shall ever deplore—whose memory will ever be venerated by Frenchmen; of a martyr, whose triumph you have been the first to proclaim; and whose virtues will, I trust, be, at some future day, consecrated by the church. Your mi-

raculous preservation makes me hope, that God has not yet abandoned France. He has, without doubt, ordained, that an unimpeachable witness should attest to all Frenchmen the love with which their King was ever animated for them. So that, knowing the whole extent of their loss, their grief may not be confined to mere lamentations; but that they may throw themselves into the arms of their heavenly Father, and receive from Him the only alleviation of which their sorrow is susceptible. I therefore exhort you, Sir, or rather I entreat, in the most earnest manner, that you will collect and publish all the particulars which you can, consistently with your holy office.

"That will be the finest monument

that I can erect to the best of Kings, and the most beloved of brothers.

"I should wish, Sir, to give you solid proofs of my profound esteem; but I can only offer you my admiration and my gratitude. These are the sentiments the most worthy of you.

"LOUIS."

This dignified and eloquent letter, would doubtless have touched a heart less attached to the Bourbons than was that of the Abbé Edgeworth. The King's letter was accompanied by a message, expressing his wish to see the Abbé. To this wish, and to the hope of being essentially useful to his Sove-

reign in distress, all other considerations immediately gave way. He took charge of the dispatches which Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere was so anxious to have safely delivered, and he set out for Blanckenberg. It should here be mentioned to his honour, that he was at this time so poor, that he was obliged to borrow a hundred pounds from a relation, to enable him to undertake this journey. He arrived safely at Blanckenberg, and delivered the papers to the King. The Abbé intended to have stayed but three days, and to have returned to London with the despatches; but Louis the Eighteenth sent his answer to England by M. de la Lezardiere, wishing to keep the Abbé with him at Blanckenberg during Lent and Easter. The Abbé wrote to his friends

in England, to account for his delaying to return to them. Still his brother and his relations had hopes that they should soon see him, and that he would at last settle in his own country. But when the time fixed for his departure arrived, and when he asked for the King's commands, his Majesty, in the most gracious manner, said to him,—

"Monsieur L'Abbé, I have appointed you my almoner. I do not command you to stay with me; but if you have no other engagement, let me, I invite, let me prevail upon you to remain with me."

Resisting all the temptations which the love of home and of domestic friends pressed upon his feelings, he resolved to follow the fallen fortunes, as they then appeared to be, the irrecoverable

fortunes of his Sovereign and of the House of Bourbon. In a letter, which he wrote at this time to a female friend, he says,—

"The die is cast.—The King wishes "me to stay with him, and never to "separate from him till death. With "his kind wish I have complied (which "shews how futile all resolves are). So "now our fates are united, for I shall "never desert my post: and if I can be "of any service to my isolated, ill-"starred prince, I shall think myself "over paid for the overthrow of my "air-built plans, which I once imagined "I should see realized."

The Abbé now made all arrangements for remaining abroad. He wrote to Bousset, his faithful servant, whom he had left in London, and ordered him

to bring over all his little property, as he had set out without any thing but mere necessaries for a week's stay at Blanckenberg. From this period to the moment of his death, the Abbé devoted himself to the service of the House of Bourbon, and we may add, to the service of humanity; for while he thus fulfilled his duties towards the high in rank and situation, he never lost sight of the humblest and the poorest of his fellow-creatures, to whom he could afford temporal assistance, or religious instruction and consolation.

Soon after the establishment of the Royal Family of France at Mittau, the Emperor Paul wished to confer the order of St. Alexander upon Louis the Eighteenth.

He sent for the Abbé Edgeworth, to

receive the insignia from his hands, and to convey them to his royal master, who in return presented the order of St. Esprit to the Emperor.

When the Abbé Edgeworth arrived at the court of Russia, Paul was so much struck by his venerable appearance, that he prostrated himself before him, and implored his blessing. He presented the Abbé with his picture, set in diamonds, and settled upon him a pension of five hundred roubles per annum.

The picture the Abbé Edgeworth laid at the feet of his King; the pension he divided with the poor.

In times of revolution, some men of ordinary characters have been known to act with heroism, from the excitement of extraordinary circumstances, or from

the impulse of sudden feeling; and after astonishing and dazzling the world for a moment, they have sunk back again to their habitual selfishness, and have merged in their original obscurity. But it was not so with the Abbé Edgeworth. He acted from steady principle; his heroism, springing from a strong sense of duty and religion, was uniformly sustained. The man was one and the same, whether the eyes of all Europe were upon him, or whether no human being witnessed his actions; whether he appeared on the scaffold with the King of France, or attended the sick bed of the most obscure individual. He was not one of those heroes of history, who are best admired at a distance, and who in a manner cheat posterity into admiration. The Abbé Edgeworth was

most respected and revered by those who were nearest to him; by those who, during the course of his life, had the best and most constant opportunities of discerning the motives of his actions, of marking the consistency of his conduct, and the dignified simplicity of his character. He lived among the great—not their dependant and flatterer in prosperity, but their support and consolation in adversity. One of his royal masters he attended on the scaffold, the other he followed in exile;—the one he sustained by the power of religion in the last moments of a violent death, the other in the more protracted trial of a calamitous life.

At this time, while the Bourbons could be only spectators of a war, which at last, in the most unexpected,

we might almost say, miraculous manner, restored them to the throne of their ancestors, they had, during a long period of adversity, severe trials of that fortitude and of that Christian patience which dignifies misfortune. At this time they gave examples, not only of Christian patience, but of Christian charity. It was the Abbé Edgeworth's daily happiness and glory to minister to these virtues, and it was his fate to lose his life in fulfilling these duties.

In the spring of the year 1807, the power of the usurper having increased with rapidity, Bonaparte directed the arms of France against the dominions of Russia. During the course of this war, it happened that some French soldiers, who had been taken prisoners, were sent to Mittau. Though they had

borne arms against the House of Bourbon, yet, in the true spirit of Christian forgiveness, their errors were forgotten by Louis the Eighteenth. The Abbé Edgeworth went, with his Majesty's permission, to attend them, to give them all the comforts which humanity could procure, and all the consolations which religion alone could bestow. A contagious fever raged among these prisoners: of this the venerable Abbé was aware; but he persevered in his visits: he would not abandon those who had no earthly hope but in him. Day and night he continued his attendance, assisted by his faithful servant, Bousset, who emulated the virtues of his master. The Abbé Edgeworth caught the fever! His constitution had been previously weakened by ill health and mental suf-

fering. At length, submitting to the force of disease, he was obliged to desist from all further exercise of his charitable and pious functions. On the 17th of May, 1807, he was confined to that bed from which he never afterwards rose. When the daughter of Louis the Sixteenth heard that the Abbé Edgeworth was taken ill, she declared that she would go immediately and see this friend of her family. All her attendants represented to her the danger of infection, and used every argument and entreaty to prevail upon her not to attempt what was so hazardous; but to use the strong expression of a lady who knew the fact, "*No one could keep her "from the sick room of her beloved and "revered invalid.*" "The less he knows "of his own wants," said the Princess,

" the more he stands in need of a friend;
" and if every human being were to fly
" from him in this contagion, I shall
" never forsake my more than friend;
" the unalterable disinterested friend
" of my family, who has left kindred
" and his country! all!—all for us!
" Nothing shall withhold my personal
" attendance from the Abbé Edgeworth.
" I ask no one to accompany me."

The Princess actually attended the death-bed of the Abbé Edgeworth, administered medicine to him with her own hands, and received his dying breath. This is here recorded, not to do honour to the Abbé Edgeworth, but to do justice to human nature, and to the gratitude of princes. A virtue, whose existence, perhaps, would not so often have been doubted, if there had

been more examples of attachment as disinterested, sincere, and steady, as that which, beyond possibility of doubt, was manifested by him, whose life was the best proof at once of his loyalty and his faith.

The Abbé died on the 22d of May, 1807; the fifth day after he had been taken ill.

The court of Louis the Eighteenth, went into mourning for the Abbé Edgeworth. The Duke and Duchess of Angoulême, the Archbishop of Rheims, and all the nobility of the court attended his funeral. His epitaph was written by the King of France; who ordered that a copy of it should be transmitted, with the following letter, to the Abbé's brother. Of this condescension and goodness, strongly as they must be felt

by all, and peculiarly by every individual of the Abbé Edgeworth's name and family, the Editor forbears to say any thing. The epitaph and the letter speak for themselves, and both in private remembrance and in public history, will, I trust, be very long preserved in honour, equally of the head and heart of the royal and the amiable writer.

D. O. M.

HIC JACET

REVERENDISSIMUS VIR

HENRICVS ESSEX EDGEWORTH DE FIRMONT,

SANCTÆ DEI ECCLESIÆ SACERDOS,

VICARIUS GENERALIS ECCLESIÆ PARISIENSIS, ETC.

QUI

REDEMPTORIS NOSTRI VESTIGIA TENENS

OCULUS CÆCO,

PES CLAUDO,

PATER PAUPERUM,

MŒRENTIUM CONSOLATOR

FUIT.

LUDOVICUM XVI.

AB IMPIIS REBELLIBUSQUE SUBDITIS

MORTI DEDITUM

AD ULTIMUM CERTAMEN

ROBORAVIT,

STRENUOQUE MARTYRI CŒLOS APERTOS

OSTENDIT.

E MANIBUS REGICIDARUM

MIRA DEI PROTECTIONE

EREPTUS,

LUDOVICO XVIII.

CUM AD SE VOCANTI

ULTRO ACCURRENS,

EI PER DECEM ANNOS,

REGIÆ EJUS FAMILIÆ,

NECNON ET FIDELIBUS SODALIBUS,

EXEMPLAR VIRTÚTUM,

LEVAMEN MALORUM

SE SE PRÆBUIT.

PER MULTAS ET VARIAS REGIONES

TEMPORUM CALAMITATE

ACTUS,

ILLI QUEM SOLUM COLEBAT

SEMPER SIMILIS,

PERTRANSIT BENEFACIENDO.

PLENUS TANDEM BONIS OPERIBUS

OBIIT

DIE 22A. MAII MENSIS

ANNO DOMINI 1807,

ÆTATIS VERO SUÆ 62.

Requiescat in pace.

A LETTER FROM LOUIS XVIII. KING OF FRANCE, TO MR. USSHER EDGEWORTH.

"SIR,

"THE letter which the Archbishop of Rheims wrote to you, has informed you of the melancholy loss we have sustained. You will regret the best and tenderest of brothers. I weep for a friend, a comforter, a benefactor, who guided the King, my brother, on his way to heaven, and pointed out the same path to me. The world did not deserve to possess him any longer. Let us submit to this stroke, in reflecting that he is gone to receive the reward due to his virtues. But as we are not forbidden to receive the condolence offered by beings of an inferior order, I offer you mine, in the midst of the general

affliction caused by this misfortune. Yes, Sir, the death of your brother has been a public calamity. My family, and all the loyal French by whom I am surrounded, feel as I do, as if we had lost our father; and our affliction is shared by all the inhabitants of Mittau. All classes and all sects united at his funeral, and universal lamentation accompanied him to his last home.

"May this recital soften your sorrow! May I thus give to the memory of this most respectable of men a new proof of my veneration and attachment!

"Be assured, Sir, of my good wishes for you and for all the family of the Abbé Edgeworth.

"Louis."

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

1. *An Extract from a Manuscript in the British Museum.*

2. *Account of the Escape of the Abbé Edgeworth from France, furnished by the Abbé Gossier.*

3. *Original Letter from Louis XVIII. to the Abbé Edgeworth.*

4. *Original Letter from Louis XVIII. to Mr. Ussher Edgeworth.*

5. *Letters from the Marquis de Bonnay to Mr. Ussher Edgeworth, relative to the disposal of the Abbé Edgeworth's effects.*

6. *Translation of the Latin Epitaph composed by Louis XVIII. for the tomb of the Abbé Edgeworth.*

EXTRAIT

D'UNE

COLLECTION DE PORTRAITS,

ET

MEDAILLONS DE CHEVEUX

DE

LOUIS XVI.;

DE LA PARTIE DE SA FAMILLE,

RENFERMÉE AVEC LUI

DANS LA TOUR DU TEMPLE,

ET DES

PRINCES DE SON AUGUSTE RACE,

RÉUNIS DANS CE MOMENT EN ANGLETERRE.

Londres,

1ER SEPTEMBRE, 1812.

Ecrit et dessiné à la plume, par le Marquis de Sy.

NOTE

Sur le recueil destiné au feu Marquis de Buckingham, et remis au Musæum Britannicum. Anno 1814.

Cet ouvrage a été dessiné à la plume, et écrit presqu'entièrement par M. le Marquis de Sy, gentilhomme Français émigré, qui a eu deux châteaux brulés, et sa femme guillotinée, à l'issue de la fatale campagne de 1792: il servait alors dans l'armée de Condé.

Note du Duc de Serent.

(No. I.)

RELATION

FAITE PAR

M. L'ABBÉ EDGEWORTH

SUR LES DERNIERS MOMENS

DU ROI.

Le sort du Roi n'était pas encore décidé, lorsque M. de Malesherbes, dont je n'avais pas l'honneur d'être personnellement connu, ne pouvant ni me recevoir chez lui, ni se transporter chez moi, me fit demander un rendez-vous en maison tierce. Il eut lieu chez Madame de Senosan.

Là, M. de Malesherbes me rendit un message du Roi, par lequel cet infortuné monarque me proposait de l'assister à la mort, si l'atrocité des hommes le conduisait jusque-là. Ce message était conçu en des termes que je me ferais un devoir de supprimer ici, s'ils ne peignaient au naturel l'ame du Prince dont je vais décrire les derniers momens. Il poussait la délicatesse du procédé jusqu'à nommer *grace* le service qu'il attendait de moi. Il le reclamait *comme un dernier gage de mon attachement pour*

lui. Il espérait que je ne lui refuserais pas . . . et ce n'était que dans le cas où je ne m'en sentirais pas le courage, qu'il me permettait de substituer à ma place un autre ecclésiastique, dont il voulait bien encore m'abandonner le choix.

Un pareil message eut sans doute été une invitation bien pressante pour tout autre. Il fut un ordre absolu pour moi, et je chargeai M. de Malesherbes de faire parvenir au Prince, s'il en avait encore les moyens, tout ce que me dictèrent en ce moment une ame sensible, et un cœur flétri par la douleur.

Quelques jours se passèrent, et n'entendant parler de rien, je me livrais déjà à l'espoir d'une déportation, ou tout-au-moins d'un sursis, lorsque (le 20 Janvier, sur les 4 heures du soir), un inconnu se présenta chez moi, et me remit un billet du conseil exécutif provisoire, conçu en ces termes: " Le conseil exécutif ayant une affaire de la plus " haute importance à communiquer au Citoyen " Edgeworth de Firmont, l'invite à passer, sans per- " dre un instant, au lieu de ses séances." L'inconnu ajouta qu'il avait ordre de m'accompagner, et qu'une voiture m'attendait dans la rue. Je descendis, et partis avec lui.

Arrivé aux Tuileries, où le conseil tenait ses séances, j'y trouvai tous les ministres réunis. La consternation était sur leur visage. Dès que je parus, ils se levèrent, et vinrent m'entourer avec une sorte d'empressement. Le ministre de la justice pre-

nant la parole: "Etes-vous," me dit-il, "le Citoyen Edgeworth de Firmont?" Je lui repondis qu'oui. "Louis Capet," reprit le ministre, "nous ayant "témoigné le désir de vous avoir auprès de lui dans "ses derniers momens, nous vous avons mandé pour "savoir si vous consentez à lui rendre le service qu'il "attend de vous?" Je lui répondis que puisque le Roi témoignait ce désir, et me désignait par mon nom, me rendre auprès de lui était un devoir. "En "ce cas," ajouta le ministre, "vous allez venir avec "moi au Temple, car je m'y rends de ce pas." Il prend aussitôt une liasse de papiers sur le bureau, confère un instant à voix basse avec les autres ministres, et sortant brusquement, me donne ordre de le suivre. Une escorte de gardes à cheval nous attendait à la porte, avec la voiture du ministre. J'y monte, et il y prend place après moi.

J'étais en habit laïque, comme l'était à cette époque tout le clergé catholique de Paris. Mais songeant en ce moment à ce que je devais d'une part au Roi, qui n'était pas familiarisé avec un pareil costume, et de l'autre à la religion elle-même, qui recevait, pour la première fois, une sorte d'hommage du nouveau gouvernement, je crus avoir le droit de reprendre en cette occasion les marques extérieures de mon état. Du moins en faire une tentative me parut être un devoir. J'en parlai donc au ministre avant de quitter les Tuileries; mais il rejetta ma proposition en termes qui ne me

permirent pas d'insister, sans cependant y rien mêler d'offensant.

Ce trajet des Tuileries au Temple se passa dans le plus morne silence. Deux ou trois fois, cependant, le ministre essaya de le rompre. " Grand Dieu!" s'écria-t-il, après avoir levé les glaces de la voiture, " de quelle affreuse commission je me " vois chargé! *Quel homme!*" ajonta-t-il en parlant du Roi, " *Quelle résignation! Quel courage! Non,* " *la nature toute seule ne sourait donner tant de force.* " *Il y a quelquechose de sur-humain.*" De pareils aveux me présentaient une occasion bien naturelle d'entrer en conversation avec lui, et de lui *dire d'affreuses* vérités. J'hésitai un moment sur le parti que je devais prendre; mais songeant d'un côté que mon premier devoir était de procurer au Roi les secours de la religion qu'il me demandait avec tant d'instance, et de l'autre qu'une conversation fortement nuancée, comme elle aurait dû l'être, pouvait m'empêcher de le remplir, je pris le parti du silence le plus absolu. Le ministre parut comprendre tout ce que ce silence lui disait, et il n'ouvrait plus la bouche durant le reste du chemin.

Nous arrivâmes ainsi au Temple, sans presque nous être parlé, et la première porte nous fut aussitôt ouverte. Mais, parvenus au bâtiment qui sépare la cour du jardin, nous fumes arrêtés. C'était, je crois, une consigne générale, et pour passer outre, il fallait que les commissaires de la Tour vinssent

faire reconnaissance des personnes, et savoir quelle affaire les amenait en ce lieu. Le ministre, lui-même, me parut être, comme moi, assujeti à cette formalité. Nous attendimes les commissaires près d'un quart d'heure, et sans nous parler.

Enfin ils se presentèrent. L'un deux était un jeune homme de 17 à 18 ans. Ils saluèrent le ministre d'un air de connaissance. Celui-ci leur dit en peu de mots qui j'étais, et quelle était ma mission. Ils me firent signe de les suivre, et nous traversâmes tous ensemble le jardin qui mène à la tour.

Ici la scène devint affreuse, au-delà de tout ce qu'il m'est possible d'exprimer. La porte de la Tour, quoique très petite et très basse, s'ouvrit avec un fracas horrible, tant elle était chargée de verroux et de barres de fer. Nous passâmes à travers une salle remplie de gardes, dans une salle plus vaste encore, et qui, à sa forme, me parut avoir été autrefois une chapelle. Là, les commissaires de la commune, chargés de la garde du Roi, se trouvaient assemblés. Je ne remarquai pas à beaucoup près sur leur physionomie cette consternation et cet embarras qui m'avaient frappé chez les ministres. Ils étaient à peu-près douze, et la plûpart en costume jacobin. Leur air, leurs manières, leur sang-froid, tout annonçait des ames atroces, que la vue du plus grand des crimes n'épouvantait pas. Je dois cependant à la vérité de dire que ce portrait

ne convenait pas à tous, et que dans le nombre je crus entrevoir quelques uns que la foiblesse seule avait conduit dans ce lieu d'horreur.

Quoiqu'il en soit, le ministre les emmena tous indistinctement dans un coin de la salle, et leur lût à voix basse les papiers qu'il avait apporté des Tuileries. Cette lecture faite, il retourna brusquement, et me dit de le suivre. Mais le conseil s'y opposa avec une espèce d'émotion. Ils se réunirent encore une seconde fois dans un coin de la salle, déliberèrent quelques instans en se parlant à l'oreille, et le résultat fut qu'une moitié du conseil accompagnerait le ministre qui montait chez le Roi, tandis que l'autre moitié resterait pour me garder.

Quand la séparation fut faite, et les portes de la salle bien fermées, le plus ancien des commissaires s'approcha de moi d'un air honnête mais embarassé. Il me parlait de la responsabilité terrible qui pesait sur sa tête; me demanda milles excuses de la liberté qu'il était forcé de prendre, &c. Je compris que ce préambule allait aboutir à me fouiller, et je le prévins, en lui disant que la réputation de M. de Malesherbes ne l'ayant pas exempté de cette formalité, je ne m'étais pas flatté, en venant au Temple, qu'on ferait une exception pour moi: que du reste je n'avais dans mes poches rien de suspect, et qu'il ne tenait qu'à lui de s'en assurer. Malgré cette déclaration, la fouille se fit avec assez de rigueur:

ma tabatière fut ouverte, et le tabac fut éprouvé. Un petit crayon d'acier, qui se trouvait par hazard dans ma poche, fut examiné scrupuleusement, de peur qu'il ne renfermât un poignard. Quant aux papiers que j'avais sur moi, ils n'y firent aucune attention; et tout se trouvant d'ailleurs en règle, on me renouvella les excuses par lesquelles on avait débuté, et l'on m'invita à m'asseoir. Mais à peine eus-je pris un fauteuil, que deux des commissaires qui étaient monté chez le Roi, descendirent, pour me dire qu'il m'était permis de le voir. Ils me conduisirent par un escalier tournant, et si étroit, que deux personnes avaient peine à se croiser. De distance en distance, cet escalier était coupé par des barrières; à chaque barrière on voyait une sentinelle en faction. Ces sentinelles étaient de vrais *sans-culottes*, presque tous ivres, et les cris affreux qu'ils poussaient, répétés par les voûtes du Temple, avaient quelquechose de vraiment effrayant.

Parvenu à l'appartement du Roi, dont toutes les portes étaient ouvertes, j'apperçus le Prince au milieu d'un groupe de 8 à 10 personnes. C'était le ministre de la justice, accompagné de quelques membres de la commune, qui venaient de lui lire *le fatal décret qui fixait irrévocablement sa mort au lendemain.* Il était au milieu d'eux, calme, tranquille, gracieux même, et pas un seul de ceux qui l'environnaient n'avait l'air aussi assuré que lui.

Dès que je parus, il leur fit signe avec la main de se retirer. Ils obéirent sans mot dire. Lui-même ferma la porte après eux, et je restai seul dans la chambre avec lui.

Jusqu'ici j'avais assez bien réussi à concentrer les différents mouvemens qui agitaient mon ame; Mais à la vue de ce Prince autrefois si grand, et alors si malheureux, je ne fus plus maître de moi-même. Mes larmes s'échappèrent malgré moi, et je tombai à ses pieds, sans pouvoir lui faire entendre d'autre langage que celui de ma douleur. Cette vue l'attendrit mille fois plus que le décret qu'on venait de lui lire. Il ne répondit d'abord à mes larmes que par les siennes; mais bientôt reprenant tout son courage; " Pardonnez," me dit-il, " Monsieur; pardonnez à ce moment de faiblesse, " si toutefois on peut le nommer ainsi. Depuis long-" tems je vis au milieu de mes ennemis, et l'habi-" tude m'a en quelque sorte familiarisé avec eux. " Mais la vue d'un sujet fidele parle tout autrement " à mon cœur. C'est un spectacle auquel mes " yeux ne sont plus accoutumés, et il m'attendrit " malgré moi."

En disant ces paroles, il me releva avec bonté, et me fit passer dans son cabinet, afin de m'entretenir plus à son aise; car de sa chambre tout était entendu. Ce cabinet avait été pratiqué dans une des tourettes du Temple. Il n'avait ni tapisseries ni

ornemens. Un mauvais poële de faïence lui tenait lieu de cheminée, et l'on voyait n'y pour tout meuble qu'une table et trois chaises de cuir.

Là, me faisant asseoir auprès de lui, " *C'est donc* " *à présent,*" me-dit-il, " *Monsieur, la grande* " *affaire qui doit m'occuper tout entier! Helas! la* " *seule affaire importante! Car que sont toutes les* " *autres affaires auprès de celle-là? Cependant je* " *vous demande quelques momens de répit, car voilà* " *que ma famille va descendre. Mais en attendant,* " *ajouta-t-il, voici un écrit que je suis bien aise de* " *vous communiquer.*" En disant ces paroles, il tira de sa poche un papier cacheté, et en brisa le sceau. C'était son testament, qu'il avait fait dès le mois de Décembre; c'est-à-dire à une époque où il doutait encore si on lui permettrait d'avoir un prêtre catholique, pour l'assister dans son dernier combat. Tous ceux qui ont lû cette pièce si intéressante, et si digne d'un roi chrétien, jugeront aisément de l'impression profonde qu'elle dût faire sur moi. Mais ce qui les étonnera sans doute, c'est que ce prince eut la force de la lire lui-même, et de la lire jusqu'à deux fois. Sa voix était ferme, et il ne paroissait d'altération sur son visage, que lorsqu'il rencontrait des noms qui lui étaient chers. Alors toute sa tendresse se réveillait, il était obligé de s'arrêter un moment, et ses larmes coulaient malgré lui. Mais lorsqu'il n'était question que de lui-même, et de ses malheurs, il n'en paroissait pas plus

ému que ne le sont communément les autres hommes, lorsqu'ils entendent le récit des maux d'autrui.

Cette lecture étant finie, et la famille royale ne descendant pas, le Roi se hâta de me demander des nouvelles de son clergé, et de la situation actuelle de l'église de France. Malgré la rigueur de sa prison, il en avait appris quelquechose. Il savait en général que les ecclésiastiques Français, obligés de s'expatrier, avaient été accuillis à Londres. Mais il ignorait absolument les détails.

Le peu que je me fis un devoir de lui en dire, parût faire sur lui la plus profonde impression, et en gémissant sur les maux du clergé de France, il ne se lassait pas de rendre hommage à la générosité du peuple Anglais, qui travaillait à les adoucir.

Mais il ne s'en tint pas à ces questions générales, et venant bientôt à des détails qui m'étonnèrent moi-même, il voulut savoir ce qu'étaient devenus plusieurs ecclésiastiques auxquels il semblait prendre un interêt plus particulier. M. le Cardinal de la Rochefoucault, et M. L'Evêque de Clermont, parurent surtout le fixer. Mais son interêt redoubla au seul nom de M. l'Archevêque de Paris. Il me demandait où il était, ce qu'il faisait, et si j'avais des moyens de correspondre avec lui. *" Marquez-" lui,"* me dit-il, *" que je meurs dans sa communion, " et que je n'ai jamais reconnu d'autre pasteur que lui. " Hélas, je crains qu'il ne m'en veuille un peu de ce " que je n'ai pas fait répondre à sa dernière lettre.*

" J'étais encore aux Tuileries ; mais en vérité les " événemens se pressaient tellement autour de moi à cette " époque, que je n'en trouvais pas le tems. Au surplus, " il me le pardonnera, j'en suis bien sûr, car il est " bon!" M. l'Abbé de Floirac eut aussi son mot. Le Roi ne l'avait jamais vu, mais il connoissait tous les services que ce respectable ecclésiastique avait rendu au diocèse de Paris, durant les tems les plus difficiles. Il me demanda ce qu'il était devenu ; et sur ce que je lui dis, qu'il avait eu le bonheur d'échapper, il m'en parla en termes qui marquaient tout le prix qu'il attachait à sa conservation, et l'estime qu'il faisait de ses vertus. Je ne sais par quel hazard la conversation tombà sur M. le Duc d'Orléans. Le Roi me parut être très instruit de ses manies et du rôle affreux qu'il jouait à la Convention. Mais il en parlait sans ombre d'amertume, et avec plus de pitié que de courroux. *" Qu'ai-je donc fait à mon cousin,"* me dit il, *" pour qu'il me poursuive ainsi ? . . . . Mais " pourquoi lui en vouloir ? . . . . Ah ! il est plus à plain- " dre que moi. . . . ma position est triste sans doute ; " mais le fut-elle encore davantage, non, très-certaine- " ment, je ne voudrais pas changer avec lui."*

Cette conversation, si intéressante, fut ici interrompu par un des commissaires, qui vint annoncer au Roi que sa famille était descendue, et qu'il lui étoit permis enfin de la voir. A ces mots il parut

tout ému, et il partit comme un trait. L'entrevue eut lieu, (autant que j'en puis juger, car je n'y assistai pas), dans une petite pièce, qui n'était séparé que par un vitrage de celle qu'occupaient les commissaires: en sorte que ceux-ci pouvaient tout voir et tout entendre. Moi-même, quoiqu'enfermé dans le cabinet où le Roi m'avait laissé, je distinguais facilement les voix; et malgé moi j'étais témoin de la scène la plus touchante qui eut jamais frappé mes oreilles. Non, jamais ma plume ne saurait rendre tout ce qu'elle eut de déchirant. Pendant près d'un quart d'heure, on n'articula pas une seule parole. Ce n'était ni des larmes ni des sanglots. C'était des cris perçans, qui devaient être entendus hors de l'enceinte de la Tour. Le Roi, la Reine, Monseigneur le Dauphin, Madame Elizabeth, Madame Royale, tous se lamentaient à la fois, et les voix semblaient se confondre. Enfin les larmes cessent, parcequ'on n'eut plus la force d'en répandre. On se parla à voix basse, et assez tranquillement. La conversation dura à peu-près une heure, et le Roi congédia sa famille, en lui donnant l'espérance de la revoir le lendemain.

" Il revint aussitôt à moi, mais dans un état de trouble et d'agitation qui montraient une ame profondément blessée. " *Ah! Monsieur,*" me dit-il en se jettant sur une *chaise,* " *quelle rencontre que celle* " *que je viens d'avoir! Faut-il donc que j'aime si tendre* " *ment, et que je sois si tendrement aimé! . . . . Mais*

" c'en est fait ; oublions tout le reste pour ne penser qu'à " l'unique affaire. Elle seule doit concentrer dans ce " moment toutes mes affections et toutes mes pensées."

Il continuait à me parler ainsi, en termes qui marquaient à la fois sa sensibilité et son courage, lorsque *Clery* vint lui proposer le souper. Le Roi hésita un moment ; mais par réflexion il accepta l'offre. Le souper ne dura pas plus de cinq minutes. Etant rentré dans le cabinet, il me proposa d'en faire autant. Je n'en avais guere le courage, mais pour ne pas le désobliger, je crus devoir obéir.

Une pensée occupait fortement mon esprit, depuis que je voyais de plus près le Roi ; c'était de lui procurer, à quelque prix que ce fut, la *Sainte Communion*, dont il avait été si long tems privé. J'aurais pû la lui apporter en secret, comme on était obligé de le faire alors à tous les fidèles qui étaient retenus chez eux : Mais la fouille exacte qu'il fallait subir en entrant au Temple, et la profanation qui en eut été infailliblement la suite, furent des raisons plus que suffisantes pour m'arrêter.

Il ne m'en restait donc d'autre ressource que de dire *la Messe* dans la chambre même du Roi, si j'en pouvais trouver les moyens. Je lui en fis la proposition, mais il en parut d'abord effrayé. Cependant, comme il sentit tout le prix de cette grace, qu'il la désirait même ardemment, et que toute son opposition ne venait que de la crainte de

me voir compromis, je le suppliai de me donner son agrément, en lui promettant que j'y mettrais prudence et discrétion. Il me le permit enfin. " *Allez,*" me dit-il, " *Monsieur; mais je crains bien* " *que vous ne réussissiez pas; car je connais les* " *hommes auxquels vous allez avoir affaire; ils n'ac-* " *cordent que ce qu'ils ne peuvent refuser.*"

Muni de cette permission, je demandai à être conduit à la salle du conseil, et j'y formai ma demande au nom du Roi. Cette proposition, à laquelle les commisaires de la Tour n'étaient pas préparés, les déconcerta extrêmement, et ils cherchaient différens prétextes pour l'éluder. " Où trouver un prêtre à l'heure qu'il est?" me dirent-ils. " Et quand nous en trouverions un, comment faire pour lui procurer les ornemens?"—" Le prêtre est tout trouvé," leur repliquai-je, " puisque me voici: et quant aux ornemens, l'église la plus voisine en fournira: il ne s'agit que de les envoyer chercher: du reste, ma demande est juste, et ce serait aller contre vos propres principes que de la refuser." Un des commissaires prit aussitôt la parole, et (quoiqu'en termes assez ménagés) donna clairement à èntendre que ma demande pouvait n'être qu'un piège, et que sous prétexte de donner la *communion* au Roi, je pouvais l'empoisonner: " L'histoire," ajouta-t-il, " nous fournit à cet égard assez d'exemples pour nous engager à être circonspects." Je me contentai de regarder fixément cet

homme, et de lui dire: "La fouille exacte à laquelle je me suis soumis en entrant ici, a du vous prouver que je ne porte pas de poison sur moi: si donc il s'en trouvait demain, c'est de vous que je l'aurai reçu, puisque tout ce que je demande pour dire la *Messe* doit passer par vos mains." Il voulut répliquer, mais ses confrères lui imposèrent silence; et, pour dernier subterfuge, ils me dirent que le conseil n'étant pas complet, ils ne pouvaient rien prendre sur eux; mais qu'ils allaient appeler les membres absens, et qu'ils me feraient part du résultat de la délibération.

Un quart d'heure se passa tant à convoquer les membres absens qu'à délibérer. Au bout de ce tems, je fus introduit de nouveau, et le président prenant la parole, me dit: "Citoyen Ministre du Culte, le conseil a pris en considération la demande que vous lui avez faite au nom de Louis Capet, et il a été résolu que sa demande étant conforme aux lois qui déclarent que tous les cultes sont libres, elle lui serait accordée. Nous y mettons cependant deux conditions: la première que vous dresserez à l'instant une requête constatant votre demande, et signée de vous; la seconde que l'exercice de votre culte sera achevé demain à 7 heures au plus tard, parcequ'à 8 précises, Louis Capet doit partir pour le lieu de son exécution.

Ces derniers mots me furent dits, comme tout le reste, avec un sang froid qui caractérisait une ame

atroce qui envisageait le plus grand des crimes sans remords. Quoiqu'il en soit, je mis ma demande par écrit, et je la laissai sur le bureau. On me reconduisit aussitôt chez le Roi, qui attendait avec une sorte d'inquiétude le dénouement de cette affaire. Le compte sommaire que je lui rendis, en supprimant toutes les circonstances, parut lui faire le plus sensible plaisir.

Il était plus de 10 heures, et je restai enfermé avec le Roi jusques bien avant dans la nuit : mais le voyant fatigué, je lui proposai de prendre un peu de repos. Il y consentit avec sa bonté ordinaire, et il m'engagea à en faire autant. Je passai par ses ordres dans la petite pièce qu'occupait *Clery*. Cette pièce n'était séparée de la chambre du Roi que par une cloison, et tandis que j'étais livré aux pensées les plus accablantes, j'entendis ce Prince donner tranquillement ses ordres pour le lendemain, et se coucher ensuite.

Dès 5 heures il se leva, et fit sa toilette à l'ordinaire. Peu après il m'envoya chercher, et m'entretint près d'une heure dans le cabinet où il m'avait reçu la veille. Au sortir du cabinet, je trouvai un autel tout dressé dans la chambre du Roi. Les commissaires avaient exécuté à la lettre tout ce que j'avais exigé d'eux. Ils avaient même été au-delà de mes désirs ; car je n'avais demandé que le simple nécessaire.

Le Roi entendit la Messe à genou par terre, sans

prie-dieu, et sans coussin. Il y communia. Je lui laissai ensuite quelque tems pour achever ses prières. Bientôt il m'envoya chercher de nouveau, et je le trouvai assis près de son poële, et ayant peine à se réchauffer. *" Mon Dieu,"* dit-il, *" que je suis heu-" reux d'avoir mes principes! Sans eux, où en serais-je " maintenant? Mais avec eux, que la mort doit me " paroître douce! Oui, il existe en haut un Juge incor-" ruptible, qui saura bien me rendre la justice que les " hommes me refusent ici bas."*

Le ministère que j'ai rempli auprès de ce Prince ne me permet que de citer quelques traits épars des différentes conversations qu'il eut avec moi durant ses seize dernières heures: mais par le peu que j'en dis, on peut juger de tout ce que je pourrais ajouter, s'il m'était permis de tout dire.

Le jour commençait à paroître, et déjà on battait la générale dans toutes les sections de Paris. Ce mouvement extraordinaire se faisait entendre très distinctement dans la Tour, et j'avoue qu'il me glaçait le sang dans les veines. Mais le Roi, plus calme que moi, après y avoir prêté un moment l'oreille, me dit, sans s'émouvoir: *" C'est probablement la " Garde Nationale qu'on commence à rassembler."* Peu après des détachemens de cavalerie entrèrent dans la cour du Temple, et on entendit parfaitement la voix des officiers, et les pieds des chevaux. Le Roi écouta encore, et me dit, avec le même sang froid: *" Il y a apparence qu'ils approchent."*

Il avait promis à la Reine, en la congédiant la veille, qu'il la reverrait encore le lendemain, et n'écoutant que son cœur, il voulait lui tenir parole.

Mais je le suppliai instamment de ne pas la mettre à une épreuve qu'elle n'aurait pas la force de soutenir. Il s'arrêta un moment, et avec l'expression de la douleur la plus profonde: "Vous "avez raison," me dit-il, "Monsieur; ce serait lui "donner le coup de la mort; il vaut mieux me "priver de cette triste consolation, et la laisser vivre "d'espérance quelques momens de plus."

Depuis 7 heures jusqu'à 8, on vint, sous différens prétextes, frapper souvent à la porte du cabinet où j'étais renfermé avec le Roi, et à chaque fois je tremblais que ce ne fût la dernière. Mais le Roi, plus ferme que moi, s'élevoit sans émotion, allait à la porte, et répondait tranquillement aux personnes qui venaient ainsi l'interrompre.

J'ignore quelles étaient ces personnes; mais parmi elles se trouvait certainement un des plus grands monstres que la Révolution eut enfantés; car je l'entendis très distinctement dire à ce prince d'un ton mocqueur, (je ne sais à quel propos); *"Oh! "Oh! tout cela était bon lorsque vous étiez Roi, mais "vous ne l'êtes plus."* Le Roi ne répliqua pas un mot; mais revenant à moi, il se contenta de me dire, *"Voyez comme ces gens-là me traitent; mais il "faut savoir tout souffrir."*

Une autre fois, après avoir répondu à un des

commissaires qui étoit venu l'interrompre, il rentra dans le cabinet, et me dit en souriant, " Ces gens-
" là voyent par tout des poignards et du poison. Ils
" craignent que je ne me tue: Hélas! ils me con-
" noissent bien mal:—me tuer serait une foiblesse;
" —non, puisqu'il le faut, je saurai bien mourir."

Enfin on frappa à la porte pour la dernière fois. C'étoit Santerre et sa troupe. Le Roi ouvrit la porte à son ordinaire, et on lui annonça (je ne pus entendre en quels termes) qu'il fallait aller à la mort. " *Je suis en affaire,*" leur dit-il avec autorité, *atten-*
" *dez-moi là; dans quelques minutes je serai à vous.*"

En disant ces paroles, il ferma la porte, et vint se jetter à mes genoux: " *Tout est consommé,*" me dit-il " *Monsieur: donnez-moi votre dernière bénédic-*
" *tion, et priez Dieu qu'il me soutienne jusqu'au bout.*" Il se releva bientôt, et sortant du cabinet, il s'avança vers la troupe qui était au milieu de sa chambre-à-coucher. Leurs visages n'annonçaient rien moins que l'assurance. Ils avaient cependant tous le chapeau sur la tête, et le Roi s'en appercevant, demanda aussitôt le sien; tandis que Clery baigné de larmes court pour le chercher. " *Y-a-t-il parmi*
" *vous quelque membre de la commune?*" leur dit le Roi, " *Je le charge d' y déposer cet écrit.*" C'était son *Testament*, et un des assistans le prit de la main du Roi. " *Je recommande aussi à la commune Clery,*
" *mon valet de chambre, des services duquel je n'ai*
" *qu'à me louer. On aura soin de lui donner ma*

" montre, et tous mes effets; tant ceux que j'ai ici, que " ceux qui ont été déposés à la commune. Je désire " également, qu'en récompense de l'attachement qu'il " m'a témoigné, on le fasse passer au service de la " Reine . . . . . DE MA FEMME," (car le Roi dit les deux.) Personne ne répondant, " MARCHONS ! " leur dit le Roi *d'un ton ferme.* A ces mots toute la troupe défile. Le Roi traversa la première cour, (autrefois le jardin), à pied. Il se retourna une ou deux fois vers la tour, comme pour dire adieu à tout ce qu'il avait de plus cher en ce bas monde; et au mouvement qu'il fit, on voyait qu'il rappellait sa force et son courage. A l'entrée de la seconde cour, se trouvait une voiture de place. Deux gendarmes tenaient la portière. A l'approche du Roi, l'un d'eux y entra le premier, et se plaça sur le devant. Le Roi monta ensuite, et me plaça à côté de lui dans le fond. L'autre gendarme y sauta le dernier, et ferma la portière. On assure qu'un de ces deux hommes était un prêtre déguisé—Je souhaite, pour l'honneur du sacerdoce, que ce soit une fable. On asssure également qu'ils avaient ordre d'assassiner le Roi au moindre mouvement qu'ils remarqueraient dans le peuple. J'ignore si c'était là leur consigne; mais il me semble qu'à moins d'avoir sur eux d'autres armes que celles qui paroissaient, il leur eut été bien difficile d'exécuter leur dessein; car on ne voyait que leurs fusils, dont il leur était impossible de faire usage.

Aureste, ce mouvement qu'on appréhendait n'était rien moins qu'une chimère. Un grand nombre de personnes dévouées au Roi, avaient résolu de l'arracher de vive force des mains de ses bourreaux, ou dumoins de tout oser pour cela. Deux des principaux acteurs, jeunes gens d'un nom très connu, étaient venu m'en prévenir la veille, et j'avoue que sans me livrer absolument à l'espérance, j'en conservai cependant une lueur jusqu'au pied de l'échaffaud. J'ai appris depuis que les ordres pour cette affreuse matinée avaient été conçus avec tant d'art, et exécutés avec tant de précision, que de 4 ou 500 personnes qui s'étaient ainsi dévouées pour leur Prince, 25 seulement avaient réussi à gagner le lieu du rendez-vous. Tous les autres, par l'effet des mesures prises dès la pointe du jour dans toutes les rues de Paris, ne purent pas même sortir de leurs maisons.

Quoiqu'il en soit, le Roi se trouvant reserré dans une voiture, où il ne pouvait ni me parler ni m'entendre sans témoins, prit le parti du silence. Je lui présentai aussitôt mon bréviaire, le seul livre que j'eusse sur moi, et il parut l'accepter avec plaisir. Il témoigna même désirer que je lui indiquasse les pseaumes qui convenaient le mieux à sa situation, et il les récitait alternativement avec moi. Ces gendarmes, sans ouvrir la bouche, paraissaient extasiés et confondus tout ensemble, de la piété tranquille d'un monarque qu'ils n'avaient sans doute

jamais vû d'aussi près. La marche dura près de deux heures. Toutes les rues étaient bordées de plusieurs rangs de citoyens armés tantôt de piques et tantôt de fusils. En outre, la voiture elle-même était entourée d'un corps de troupes imposant, et formé sans doute de tout ce qu'il y avait de plus corrompu dans Paris. Pour comble de précautions, on avait placé en avant des chevaux une multitude de tambours, afin d'étouffer par ce bruit les cris qui auraient pû se faire entender en faveur du Roi. Mais comment en aurait-on entendu ? personne ne paroissait ni aux portes ni aux fenêtres, et on ne voyait dans les rues que des citoyens armés, c'est-à-dire des citoyens, qui tout-au-moins par foiblesse concouraient à un crime qu'ils détestaient peut-être dans le cœur.

La voiture parvint ainsi dans le plus grand silence à la place de Louis XV., et s'arrêta au milieu d'un grand espace vuide qu'on avait laissé autour de l'échaffaud. Cet espace était bordé de canons, et au-delà tant que la vue pouvait s'étendre, on voyait une multitude en armes. Dès que le Roi sentit que la voiture n'allait plus, il se retourna vers moi, et me dit à l'oreille, " *Nous voila arrivés, si je ne me* " *trompe.*" Mon silence lui répondit qu'oui. Un des bourreaux vint aussitôt ouvrir la portière, et les gendarmes voulurent descendre; mais le Roi les arrêta, et appuyant sa main sur mon genou, " *Mes-* " *sieurs,*" leur dit-il d'un ton de maître, " *je vous*

" recommande Monsieur que voilà; ayez soin qu'après " ma mort il ne lui soit fait aucune insulte. Je vous " charge d'y veiller." Ces deux hommes ne répondant rien, le Roi voulut reprendre d'un ton plus haut; mais l'un d'eux lui coupa la parole: " Oui, oui," lui répondit-il, " nous en aurons soin; laissez-nous faire." Et je dois ajouter que ces mots furent dits d'un ton de voix qui aurait dû me glacer, si dans un moment tel que celui-là, il m'eut été possible de me replier sur moi-même.

Dès que le Roi fût descendu de voiture, trois bourreaux l'entourèrent, et voulurent lui ôter ses habits. Mais *il les repoussa avec fierté, et se déshabilla lui-même.* Il défit également son col, ouvrit sa chemise, et l'arrangea de ses propres mains! Les bourreaux, que la contenance fière du Roi avait déconcerté un moment, semblèrent alors reprendre de l'audace. Ils l'entourèrent de nouveau, et voulurent lui prendre les mains. *" Que prétendez-vous?"* leur dit le Prince, en retirant ses mains avec vivacité. *" Vous lier,"* répondit un des bourreaux. *" Me " lier!"* repartit le Roi d'un air d'indignation, *" Je " n'y consentirai jamais; faites ce qui vous est com- " mandé, mais vous ne me lierez pas: renoncez à ce " projet."* Les bourreaux insistèrent; ils élevèrent la voix, et semblaient déjà vouloir appeler du secours pour le faire de vive force.

C'est ici peut-être le moment le plus affreux de cette désolante matinée: une minute de plus, et le

meilleur des rois recevait, sous les yeux de ses subjets rebelles, un outrage mille fois plus insupportable que la mort, par la violence qu'on semblait vouloir y mettre. Il parut le craindre lui-même; et se retournant vers moi, il me regarda fixement comme pour me demander conseil. Hélas! il m'était impossible de lui en donner un, et je ne lui répondis d'abord que par mon silence. Mais comme il continuait de me regarder: " *Sire,*" lui dis-je avec larmes, " *dans ce nouvel outrage, je ne vois qu'un dernier trait de ressemblance entre votre Majesté et le Dieu qui va être sa récompense.*" A ces mots, il leva les yeux au ciel, avec une expression de douleur que je ne saurais jamais rendre. " *Assurément,*" me dit-il, " *il ne faudra rien moins que son exemple, pour que je me soumette à un pareil affront;*" et se retournant vers les bourreaux, " *Faites ce que vous voudrez,*" leur dit-il " *je boirai le calice jusqu'à la lie.*"

Les marches qui conduisaient à l'échaffaud étaient extrêmement roides à monter. Le Roi fut obligé de s'appuyer sur mon bras, et à la peine qu'il semblait prendre, je craignis un moment que son courage ne commençât à fléchir. Mais quel fut mon étonnement, lorsque parvenu à la dernière marche, je le vis s'échapper, pour ainsi dire, de mes mains, traverser d'un pied ferme toute la largeur de l'échaffaud, imposer silence par son seul regard à 15 ou 20 tambours qui étaient placés

vis-à-vis de lui, et d'une voix si forte qu'elle dût être entendue du Pont-Tournant, prononcer distinctement ces paroles à jamais mémorables: "*Je* "*meurs innocent de tous les crimes qu'on m'impute.* "*Je pardonne aux auteurs de ma mort, et je prie Dieu* "*que le sang que vous allez répandre ne retombe jamais* "*sur la France.*"

Il allait continuer, mais un homme à cheval, et en uniforme national, fondant tout-à-coup l'épée à la main, et avec des cris féroces sur les tambours, les obligea de rouler.

Plusieurs voix se firent entendre en même tems pour encourager les bourreaux. Ils parurent s'animer eux-mêmes, et saisissant avec effort le plus vertueux des rois, ils le traînèrent sous la hache, qui d'un seul coup fit tomber sa tête.

Tout cela fut l'ouvrage de peu d'instans. Le plus jeune des bourreaux, (il ne semblait pas avoir plus de 18 ans), saisit aussitôt la tête, et la montra au peuple, en faisant le tour de l'échaffaud. Il accompagnait cette cérémonie monstrueuse des cris les plus atroces, et des gestes les plus indécens. Le plus morne silence régna d'abord. Bientôt quelques cris de Vive la République! se font entendre. Peu-à-peu les voix se multiplièrent, et dans moins de 10 minutes ce cri, mille fois répété, devint le cri de la multitude, et tous les chapeaux furent en l'air.

FIN.

21 *Janvier*, 1793,
10 *heures* 10 *minutes du matin.*

(No. II.)

ACCOUNT

OF THE

ESCAPE OF THE ABBÉ EDGEWORTH

FROM FRANCE.

FURNISHED BY M. GOSSIER.

[The following paper was communicated by M. L'Abbé Gossier to the Editor. It was drawn up and given to him by some distinguished persons, who had the best means of knowing the accuracy of its contents.]

Monsieur L'Abbé Edgeworth vivoit avec sa mère et sa sœur aux Récollects à Paris, Confesseur de Madame Elisabeth, et Grand Vicaire de Paris. Il fut, bientôt après la détention du Roi, obligé de chercher sa sureté hors de la capitale. Il se retira donc avec un jeune homme (Louis Bousset) qui s'était depuis peu attaché à lui, à Choisy-le-Roi, chez M. le Comte de la Lezardiere. Son ami, à l'époque affreuse de la condamnation de Louis XVI., M. de Malsherbes s'adressa à M. de la Lezardiere de la part du Roi, pour avoir M. Edgeworth dans ses derniers momens. Il avait été indiqué à S. M. par Madame

Elizabeth.—A l'instant où la tête du Roi fut séparée du corps, M. L'Abbé Edgeworth descendit de l'échaffaud, la foule s'ouvrit pour lui faire passage. Il se rendit immédiatement chez M. de Malsherbes, et de là au Temple près de la Reine, et y resta jusqu'au soir. De Paris il se rendit chez son ami, qui venait de voir expirer sa femme à la même heure où le Roi avoit eu la tête tranchée. Cet évènement donna une chambre de plus à la famille, et ce logement fut celui du digne Abbé, après sa sortie de Paris. Il resta donc à Choisy assez tranquille, jusqu'au commencement d'Avril, lorsque deux cents sans-culottes et deux pièces de cannon arrivèrent un matin à Choisy. Une personne qui apperçut ce détachement se dirigeant vers l'habitation de M. de la Lezardiere, vint avertir cette famille, qui à peine eut le tems de cacher des papiers de conséquence, et de serrer les ornemens de la chapelle parmi le linge de la maison. On avait entouré l'habitation pendant ce court intervalle ; et une personne ayant voulu sortir, fut arrêtée par cette troupe de brigands. De son côté, M. Edgeworth craignant pour sa sureté, se présente à la porte, et ne rencontre aucun obstacle. M. de la Lezardiere est arrêté, on saisit quatre malles pleines de papiers que l'on croit contre-révolutionnaires, et cette troupe retourne à Paris accompagnée de la fille ainée de M. de la Lezardiere, qui n'avait point voulu abandonner son père. Aussitôt que ce détache-

ment fut parti, on se met sur les traces de M. L'Abbé Edgeworth, et après bien des recherches, Louis Bousset, ce jeune homme attaché à M. L'Abbé Edgeworth, et qui était resté dans la maison pendant la perquisition, pour observer ce qui se passait, retrouva son maître à un endroit appelé *La Belle Epine*, sur la route de Fontainebleau, et le ramena au château. Quelques jours après, un dimanche, on vint avertir que les Républicains venaient faire une nouvelle visite. M. L'Abbé sort à l'instant de la maison, passe à côté des Républicains, qui ne le cherchant pas particulièrement, ne font point attention à lui. Il est bon aussi d'observer ici, que M. Edgeworth, après la mort du Roi, avait pris le nom d'Essex, nom de baptême de sa famille; qu'il était habillé en bourgeois même avant la mort du Roi, et qu'il portait ses cheveux noués comme la grande partie des Français, et avait une redingotte bleue, couleur alors nationale. Il se dirigea du côté du parc de Ville Neuve St. George, où son fidèle Bousset le retrouva pour le ramener à Choisy, où ils restèrent jusqu'au 16. Le 16 ils partirent pour Paris, ne se trouvant plus en sureté après ces deux visites, M. L'Abbé resta un jour seulement dans cette ville, et fut à Montigny, dans le diocèse d'Orléans, où ils restèrent trois mois, chez le Comte de Rochoir, qui un matin lui fit voir un papier de nouvelles dans lequel on avait inséré, à dessein de faire connaître son changement de nom, qu'une lettre de la Princesse

Lamballe avait été remise au Roi, avant sa mort, par l'Abbé Essex. M. L'Abbé se fit alors connaître au Comte, qui ne soupçonnait pas même qu'il fût prêtre, à lui, ayant été adressé comme ami de la maison de Rochoir. Bousset, qui de son côté était attentif à tout ce qui pouvait contribuer à la sureté de son maître, avait lû le même article dans un papier qu'un médécin (bien pensant) lui avait prêté : il en fit aussitôt part à M. Edgeworth, qui lui dit avoir lû la même chose dans un papier que le Comte de Rochoir lui avait montré, et qu'il s'était fait connaître au Comte. Il recommande à Bousset d'être sur l'alerte, et sans perdre de tems, il écrit à Corbeille, à Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere, qui lui mande de venir à Fontainbleau, chez un prêtre qui, avec sa sœur, avait élévé une pension dans cette ville, sans qu'on pût soupçonner qu'il fût dans les ordres. L'armée de Mayence, qui couvrait alors toutes les routes, et qui, transportée en poste à la Vendée, employait toutes les voitures et tous les chevaux, fit éprouver les plus grandes difficultés à M. Essex, et sans un curé sermentaire, qui voulût bien prêter sa voiture pour un homme qu'il ne connoissait pas, et un jeune paysan qui emprunta un cheval qui n'avait pas encore porté le collier, le digne et respectable Abbé eut été obligé de rester exposé à la bonne foi d'un homme dont on n'était par sûr. Rendu à Fontainebleau, il y fut logé par l'entremise de Madame de Palavicini, à qui il

avait été recommandé. Il resta peu dans cette ville ; et prenant la diligence, il se rendit à Rouen ; de là à Caen et Bayeux, et resta trois ans dans cette dernière ville. La municipalité de cette ville était bien composée, lorsque M. Edgeworth y arriva ; ce qui fit qu'on ne chercha point à savoir qui il était. Bientôt un renouvellement de municipalité fit entièrement oublier que M. Edgeworth fut étranger à la ville : il resta donc deux ans chez Madame Foss assez tranquille, et changea de domicile peu de tems après. La famille Lezardiere vint aussi à Bayeux ; mais loin de courir des dangers, elle devint presque une sauve-garde pour le digne Abbé, le public croyant M. de la Lez réfugié patriote de la Vendée. Cependant un jour on fût menacé d'une visite générale, et la prudence lui fit chercher un azile chez une pauvre femme à la campagne, où il resta huit jours caché dans un grenier, sans lumière et sans feu. Il revint après ces huit jours chez la famille La Lezardiere, (dans son logement) et étant compris dans le nombre des habitans, fut obligé de faire le service de garde nationale, mais il se fit remplacer. Il avait pris le nom de Henry, et un nouveau dénombrement venant à avoir lieu, trois commissaires se présentèrent un jour chez le Comte de la Lezardiere, pour savoir le nombre des habitans de la maison. Un curé jureur, qui s'était marié trois fois, était à leur tête ; s'adressant à Mademoiselle de la Lezardiere, il

lui dit, " N'avez vous point dans votre maison " d'autres personnes que celles mentionnées dans " cette liste ?" " Oui," répondit cette demoiselle, qui n'aurait pas voulu dire un mensonge, " nous avons " ici un ami que nous appelons Henry; si vous " désirez j'irai lui demander son autre nom ?"—Cela n'est point nécessaire," répondirent les commissaires, et la visite n'eut point d'autre résultat. Ils avaient une servante qui pensait bien, et par ces bizarreries assez ordinaires dans des tems de révolution, cette servante, qui avait un frère, menuisier de son état, et membre du comité révolutionnaire, était de la plus grande utilité à ses maîtres, apprenant par son frère tout ce qui pouvait contribuer à leur sûreté. N'étant resté en France que pour être utile au reste de la famille royale, aussitôt après l'exécution de ces illustres victimes, M. l'Abbé Edgeworth chercha les moyens de quitter cette terre de désolation, et conjointement avec M. de la Lezardiere, acheta un bateau pour s'échapper de la côte de France. Dans cet intervalle, M. de la Lezardiere ayant appris que son fils venait d'être fait prisonnier par les Républicains dans une rencontre qu'ils avaient eue avec les Vendéens, ne veut plus quitter la France qu'il ne soit assuré du sort de cet enfant. L'Abbé Edgeworth est donc obligé de chercher d'autres moyens de s'évader. Ce fut alors qu'il découvrit qu'il existait dans le pays une correspondance pour l'armée du

Général de Frotté par laquelle ce général royaliste communiquait avec une petite île appelée St. Marcouff, laquelle étoit occupée par un détachement de troupes Anglaises. Abouché avec des personnes qui servaient à cette corespondance, il fut convenu qu'il s'embarquerait le soir même : on vint donc le chercher, lui et son fidèle Bousset, et on les conduit au chateau de —— d'où ils devaient passer ; mais le général arrivant avec 4 de ses officiers, et ne connaissant point Monsieur l'Abbé, il prit le bateau de sa correspondance, et laissa à une autre fois à faire passer Monsieur Edgeworth. 4 ou 5 jours après, des signaux convenus ayant été faits, on se rendit sur le rivage, où un bateau avait été envoyé de l'île pour le recevoir. Bousset, accompagné de 3 personnes de la correspondance, se mit à l'eau pour embarquer quelques effets, et quoiqu'au danger de la vie, ayant de l'eau par dessus la tête, et ne sachant pas nager, il atteignit la chaloupe : mais la marée étant déjà presque passée à leur arrivée, il fut obligé de redescendre avec le même péril, et de venir au devant de son maître, qui était dans l'eau jusqu'à la ceinture, pour attraper le bateau, qui dérivant avec la marée, ne laissa à nos deux infortunés d'autre moyen que celui de regagner au plus vîte, et avant le jour, le château d'où ils étaient partis. Ces embarcations ne se faisaient pas sans quelque accident : dans la dernière on avait laissé tomber des pistolets sur le rivage, et les patrouilles s'en étant apperçues, furent

doublées sur cette partie de la côte. Les chouans, accoutumés à ce danger, ne faisaient pas grand cas de cette force; et ayant fait des signaux à la côte, 15 jours après ils descendirent pour leur correspondance. L'Abbé, instruit de l'arrivée de cette occasion, aurait pu en profiter, mais son fidèle Bousset l'ayant instruit du doublement des patrouilles, et la difficulté qu'il avait à marcher, joint à une vue très basse, lui firent juger plus prudent de différer. Ils quittèrent le lendemain le chateau de —— et furent à trois lieues de là, où ils pouvaient s'embarquer le lendemain soir avec plusieurs personnes. Couchés 10 à 12 par terre, pour appercevoir le bateau qu'on attendait, on découvre vers le lieu où ils s'étaient tapis, un homme côtoyant le rivaye : bientôt on lui crie *Qui vive;* on lui demande son passeport; ce à quoi il se refuse, et on finit par le laisser passer. Cet homme, qu'un des leurs reconnût pour être le Maréchal du Bourg, et commandant de la garde nationale, fit qu'on se retira immédiatement à 2 lieues de là, chez une sœur d'un jeune homme de la corespondance, qui le lendemain, sous prétexte de faire travailler à une charette, envoya chercher le maréchal, qui, après avoir été bien tourné, conta son aventure, et finit par dire : " Ce sont des émigrés ou des chouans; *ils* " ne m'ont point fait de mal; j'aime mieux ne rien " dire, de peur qu'on nous fasse monter la garde " plus souvent." Après avoir passé 3 jours dans cette

maison, ils revient au chateau de Vienville, et le bateau ayant fait des signaux qui avaient été apperçus par les Républicains, ils sont reçus en arrivant à coup de canon et de fusil, et après ce petit engagement de part et d'autre, le bateau se retire, et M. Edgeworth renonce pour toujours à cette voye de quitter la France. Il s'abouche avec le curé d'Aniere, et ils conviennent d'acheter un bateau. Le frère du curé fait le marché pour la somme de 1000 livres (Tournois): ils retournent à Bayeux quelques jours, et Bousset est envoyé à Mr. M. B. Mr. de F. pour l'avertir qu'un bateau est a Vienville, prêt à les recevoir. Ils s'embarquent tous à 11 heures du soir, le 20 Août 1796, et decouvrent, en quittant le rivage, un bâtiment qu'ils prennent pour Républicain; mais bientôt leur signaux étant répondus, ils ont la satisfaction de les voir répétés, et une embarcation de l'île St. Marcouff, vient les chercher, ils arrivèrent le 21 à St. Marcouff, à environ 2 heures après midi. L'Abbé se fit connoître au Capitaine Price, commandant de cette station, qui le reçut avec cette cordialité qu'il a montrée à tous les Français qui ont eu des relations avec lui. Après avoir donné à dîner à M. Edgeworth, le soir même, il le fait embarquer pour Portsmouth, sur un batiment de 10 canons. Ils arrivent dans cette ville le 25, et descendent sans la moindre difficulté, le commandant de St. Marcouff ayant tout prévu à ce sujet. Le lendemain ils se rendent à Londres, à l'hotel de la Sablonniere,

et 6 jours après, M. L'Abbé partit seul avec le Baron de Rolle, pour se rendre près de MONSIEUR, à Edinbourg, où il passa une semaine. Revenu à Londres, il y resta jusqu'au mois de Janvier, visitant et étant visité par des personnes de la plus haute distinction. Dans le courant de ce mois, Mademoiselle de la L. arriva de France à Londres, chargée de faire parvenir à Louis XVIII. des projets de contre-révolution. Elle ne trouva point, à son arrivée, un frère qu'elle croyait y trouver: il s'était lui-même rendu à Blackenburg, auprès de Louis XVIII., pour d'autres affaires, et L'Abbé se chargeant des dépêches, croisa le frère sur la route, sans cependant qu'ils se reconnussent. Bousset resta à Londres pendant ce voyage; il était le seul confident de cette demoiselle qui ne voulait pas être connue. L'Abbé ne comptait rester que trois jours auprès du Roi, et revenir avec Mr. de la L.; mais l'Abbé demandant au Roi de repartir avec sa réponse, le Roi la lui fit écrire, et l'engagea de passer le Carême à Blackheath, pour lui faire faire ses Pâques. Il écrivit donc à Londres, et après l'époque fixée par Sa M. ayant demandé les ordres du Roi, S. M. lui dit, avec cette bonté qui lui est particulière, " Monsieur l'Abbé, je vous ai nommé mon aumônier. Je ne vous ordonne point de rester près de moi, mais si vous n'avez pas d'engagement, je vous y invite." En conséquence, Mr. Edgeworth écrivit à Londres à son fidèle Bousset de venir le rejoindre, et la lettre de M. Edge-

worth ayant été reçue en réponse des offres faites par Mademoiselle de la L——, cette demoiselle retourna en France, et Bousset se mit en route pour Blackenburg. Ce fut pendant le tems qu'il resta à Blackenburg, près du Roi, qu'il eut occasion de voir M. Clery, ce serviteur si fidèle de Louis XVI. qu'il avait connû avec la Famille Royale dans la prison du Temple, et de pleurer ensemble leur perte irreparable. En 1798, il suivit le Roi à Mittau, et porta en 1800, à l'Empereur Paul, une lettre de la main du Roi, et la décoration de l'ordre du St. Esprit. Il fut reçu avec la plus grande bonté par cet empereur, qui lui fit présent d'une boëte enrichie de diamans, et sur laquelle é tait le portrait de S. M. I.; en outre, une pension annuelle de 500 ducats. Après être resté 15 jours à Petersbourg, il revint auprès de ses maîtres, et courut avec eux les dangers de leur renvoi de Russie en 1801. Arrivé à Varsovie, il se fit respecter et admirer par sa piété profonde, et son humeur égale. Confesseur du Roi, de *Madame*, de Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême, il ne profita, avec le Comte de la Chapelle, ministre du Roi, et son ami particulier, des bontés et de la confiance des Princes, que pour leur être utile. Calmer, adoucir les chagrins et [illegible] malheurs particuliers, et mettre par tout cet accord et cette union si désirable et si peu connue dans la maison des Princes. Revenu à Mittau après la mort de Paul I., il continua ses fonctions d'aumônier, et disait la messe tous les jours à 7

heures du matin, à laquelle S. A. R. Madame, assistait toujours. En 1807, la guerre entre la France et la Russie ayant eu lieu, les prisonniers blessés, malades Français, furent envoyés à Mittau. Le Roi, les Princes, les grands, et jusques aux domestiques, ne virent dans ces Français que des hommes égarés. Les soins de chacun leur furent prodigués ainsi qu'aux Russes, des distributions faites tous les jours. *Madame*, et les personnes de sa suite, faisaient de la charpie: Mr. Edgeworth, accompagné presque toujours de son fidèle Bousset, répandait jour et nuit des secours d'argent, et les consolations de son ministère, parmi cette troupe de malades. Bousset, atteint d'une maladie épidémique, fut obligé de s'aliter. Son maître, qui depuis longtems avait la plus mauvaise santé, fut aussi pris de cette maladie, ainsi que le confesseur de la Reine, l'Abbé Dertournelle, et une demoiselle Marie. L'Abbé ne put résister, ainsi que ces deux dernières personnes, à la force du mal, et mourut le cinquième jour de sa maladie, 22 May, 1807.

Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême, l'Archevêque de Rheims, les grands de la cour, accompagnèrent à-pied les restes de cet homme, et les virent déposer dans la tombe. Bousset, rendu à la vie à force de soins, n'apprit que 22 jours après la perte qu'il avait faite, et malgré la mort en quelque sorte subite du digne Abbé, qui n'avait point laissé de testament, on lui donna la garde-robe de son maître: on écrivit au

frère de M. Edgeworth en Irlande, pour la disposition des objets de valeur appartenant à son frère. La réponse fut que " Une vente serait faite, et que du montant de cette vente on ferait une pension à la tante et la sœur de l'Abbé Edgeworth, encore vivantes en France, et qu'à leur mort, la somme ainsi provenue serait donnée à jamais à Bousset, ou à ses héritiers; et confirmant la donation de la garderobe. Le Roi, depuis, a bien voulu attacher ce même Bousset à sa chapelle, comme marque approbative de sa bonne conduite.

(No. III.)

TO THE ABBÉ EDGEWORTH,

IN LONDON.

" J'ai appris, Monsieur, avec une extrême satisfaction, que vous êtes enfin échappé à tous les dangers auxquels votre sublime dévouement vous a exposé. Je remercie sincèrement la divine Providence d'avoir daigné conserver en vous un de se plus fidèles ministres, et le confident de dernières pensées d'un frère dont je pleurerai sans cesse la perte, dont tous les bons Français béniront à jamais la mémoire ; d'un martyr dont vous avez le premier proclamé le triomphe, et dont j'espère que l'église consacrera un jour les vertus. Le miracle de votre conservation me fait espérer que Dieu n'a pas encore abandonné la France. Il veut sans-doute qu'un témoin irréprochable atteste à tous les Français l'amour dont leur Roi fût sans cesse animé pour eux, afin que, connoissant toute l'étendue de leur perte, ils ne se bornent pas à de stériles regrets, mais qu'ils cherchent, en se jetant dans les bras d'un père qui

les leur tend, le seul adoucissement que leur juste douleur puisse recevoir. Je vous exhorte donc, Monsieur, ou plutôt je vous demande avec instance, de recueillir et publier tout ce que votre saint ministère ne vous ordonne pas de taire. C'est le plus beau monument que je puisse ériger au meilleur des rois, et au plus chéri des frères.

" Je voudrais, Monsieur, vous donner des preuves efficaces de ma profonde estime ; mais je ne puis que vous offrir mon admiration et ma reconnoissance. Ce sont les sentimens les plus dignes de vous.

" Louis."

(No. IV.)

COPIE DE LA LETTRE

DE

LOUIS XVIII. ROI DE FRANCE,

A

MONSIEUR USSHER EDGEWORTH.

" La lettre que Mons. l'Archêveque de Reims vous écrît, Mons. vous instruira de la douleureuse perte que nous venons de faire. Vous regretterez le meilleur et le plus tendre de frères. Je pleure un amì, un consolateur, un bienfaiteur, qui avait conduit le Roi, mon frère, aux portes du ciel, et m'en traçait à moi-même la route. Le monde n'était pas digne de le posséder plus longtems. Soumettons-nous, en nous attachant à la pensée qu'il a reçû le prix de ses vertus: mais comme il ne nous est pas défendu d'embrasser des consolations d'un ordre inférieur, je vous en offre dans l'affliction générale que ce malheur a causé. Oui, Monsieur,

la mort de monsieur votre frère a été une calamité publique; ma famille, tous le fidèles Français qui m'entourent, ont, ainsi que moi, crûs perdre un père, et notre affliction a été partagée par tous les habitans de Mittau: toutes les classes, toutes les croyances, se sont réunies à ses funérailles, et une douleur universelle l'a accompagné à sa dernière demeure.

" Puisse ce récit adoucir votre peine! Puisse-je donner ainsi à la mémoire du plus respectable des hommes, une nouvelle preuve de vénération et d'attachement.

" Soyez persuadé, Monsieur, de tous mes sentimens pour vous, et pour la famille de Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth.

" Louis."

(No. V.)

LETTER

FROM THE

MARQUIS DE BONNAY

TO

USSHER EDGEWORTH, Esq.

Mitau, Courland, October the 18th, 1807.

Sir,

I hope you will excuse me for my not addressing you in English. The details in which I am obliged to enter with you, require so much exactness and precision, that I dare not make use of any other language but my own; though you are, Sir, full at liberty to answer me either in French or in English as you will chuse it.

Monsieur,

J'ai été nommé par Monsieur le Comte de l'Isle pour prendre, conjointement avec Monsieur l'Archevêque de Reims, et sous sa direction, connaissance

des affaires et des papiers laissés par monsieur votre frère, par celui que nous ne pleurons pas moins que vous, et parmi les amis les plus intimes duquel j'avais le droit et l'orgueil de me compter. Monsieur l'Archevêque Duc de Reims m'a chargé d'entrer avec vous dans quelques détails à ce sujet; et par la lettre qu'il vous écrit de son côté, vous êtes instruit, Monsieur, que la mienne peut être considérée par vous comme si elle avait été faite en commun.

A peine, Monsieur, la mort avait-elle frappé votre malheureux frère, que nos idées se portèrent sur vous, et sur la peine que vous en éprouveriez. Il a aussitôt été pris des mesures pour vous instruire de votre malheur, et cette tâche pénible ne m'a du moins pas été réservée.

Mais, Monsieur, quelque cruels que puissent être les détails des dernières circonstances de la vie d'un frère chéri, votre cœur est surement avide de les entendre; et je crois remplir un devoir envers vous, en vous faisant connaître tout ce qui s'est passé.

La fin de Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth a été digne de sa vie: il est mort victime de la charité chrétienne dont il avait toujours été le modèle. Quelques prisonniers Français avaient été envoyés ici à l'hopital militaire dans un état de santé déplorable. Sur 31 qui [illegible] partis de l'armée, 23 seulement avaient [illegible] le voyage; et de 23 plusieurs semblaient [illegible] leur dernier moment.

A peine instruit de leur arrivée, Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth vola à leur secours, leur prodigua tous les soins et les consolations qui étaient en son pouvoir, et leur administra les secours de l'église.

Il fut bientôt reconnu que leur maladie était contagieuse. C'était celle sans-doute qui est connûe en médecine sous le terme de *fièvre des hopitaux*. Forcé, par les détails de son ministère, d'approcher très près de ces malheureux, de respirer leur haleine, et de recevoir les émanations empoisonnées qui exhalaient de leurs corps et de leurs lits, monsieur votre frère a puisé auprès d'eux les germes de la fièvre nerveuse et maligne qui l'a tué, et qui a également emporté l'aumonier de Madame la Comtesse de L'Isle, qui l'avait remplacé auprès de ces mourans. 13 d'entr'eux seulement ont pû échapper.

Peu de jours après avoir commencé à remplir ces devoirs sacrés mais dangereux, Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth, dont la constitution avait toujours été d'une délicatesse extrême, et l'était devenue encore d'avantage depuis quelques années, monsieur votre frère, dit-je, éprouva de petits frissons intérieurs, auxquels il attacha d'autant moins d'importance qu'il y était assez sujet. Il eut même quelques mouvemens de fièvre plus marqués; mais il n'y donna presque pas d'attention, jusqu'à ce qu'enfin ses amis s'en apperçurent.

Ce fut le Dimanche, 17 Mai, que son secret fût découvert. Il souffrait en silence depuis le Mer-

credi. Il continua, cependant, de mener la vie commune encore ce même Dimanche. Le Lundi, il dit la messe, suivant sa coutume, à 7 heures du matin. J'allai le voir ensuite. Je le trouvai avec un frisson plus marqué encore que la veille; souffrant, changé, abattu, et forcé de céder au mal et de se mettre au lit.

Le médecin qui l'y avait engagé, n'appercevait aucun symptôme fâcheux: et, quant-à-moi, je ne redoutais que la faiblesse, qui était habituellement très-grande, et qui me laissait tout craindre, en cas d'une maladie sérieuse.

La journée du Lundi et celle du Mardi se passèrent ainsi; *presque* dans la sécurité de notre part, et *entièrement* de celle du médecin et de la sienne. Nous étions tous sans-cesse chez lui; mais nous n'y restions pas, parceque sa poîtrine semblait fatiguée, et qu'il lui était pénible de parler. Mais sa tête était calme, ses idées nettes. Il souffrait avec douceur et resignation, et souriait avec amitié à nos questions et à nos empressemens.

Le Mercredi, 20, au matin, son pouls me parut dans un désordre affreux, et j'en fus extrêmement alarmé. Je me hâtai de le quitter, en lui disant, que si je n'écoutais que mon cœur, je passerais mes jours entiers auprès de lui. Il sortit vivement sa main de [illegible], et me serra la mienne, en me disant, avec un accent qui me pénétra, "Oh! je compte "sur vous comme sur mon frère!"

J'allai faire part de mes observations, sans toutefois y trop insister, parceque mon ignorance en médecine ne me permettait pas d'y attacher une grande valeur; et quand je vis que le médecin continuait à ne pas appercevoir l'apparence d'un danger même éloigné, je crus que ce désordre du pouls ne tirait nullement à conséquence.

Dès ce moment, cependant, la maladie prit à mes yeux un caractère plus grave, et qui alla toujours en augmentant. Dès le Mercredi soir, je ne trouvai plus la même netteté dans ses idées. Le Jeudi le médecin lui-même reconnut que la maladie avait changé de caractère. Le malade était absorbé; et quoiqu'il reconnut encore tout le monde, il n'avait qu'une connaissance assez vague. Les redoublemens de la fièvre continuaient et augmentaient. Il parlait avec peine, et mettait peu de liaison dans ses phrases. La nuit fut très mauvaise. Il eut quelques disparates. Il témoigna quelque désir d'écrire à sa famille; se fit apporter du papier, et ne put écrire une seule ligne.

Le Vendredi matin, 22 Mai, je le trouvai extrêmement mal. Il me regarda d'un air de connaissance, mais sans me parler.. Il dit bonjour à Monsieur l'Archevêque de Reims. Le médecin commençait à s'allarmer; mais croyait avoir encore une grande marge. Hélas! à 3 heures et demie, les symptômes de l'agonie parurent: la poitrine commença à se

remplir. On lui administra les derniers sacremens de l'église. Un peu après 8 heures, il expira.

Vous peindre la désolation commune et particulière, n'est pas en mon pouvoir. Et nos augustes maîtres, et Monseigneur et Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, et toutes les personnes attachées à nos Princes, et leurs domestiques et les nôtres; il n'y eut qu'un cœur et qu'un cri. Les lamentations, les gémissemens, les sanglots, firent retentir le château. Jamais homme n'a été aimé, jamais homme n'a été pleuré, comme lui. Chacun de nous croit avoir perdu son frère, son père, son bon ange, son ange protecteur: et ces regrets, Monsieur, ce ne seront pas ceux d'un jour. C'est au nom de plus de cent personnes que j'ai l'honneur de vous parler: ce seront ceux de toute notre vie.

Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth a été inhumé le 25 Mai, dans le cimetière catholique de cette ville. La pompe de son enterrement a été simple, mais décente. Monseigneur le Duc d'Angoulême, et nous tous à sa suite, avons accompagné le convoi jusqu'à la fosse. Vous connaîtrez, Monsieur, l'épitaphe qu'a composé Monsieur le Comte de L'Isle pour [illegible] votre frère, et qu'il se propose de faire [illegible] sa tombe. (Le rédacteur de la Gazette [illegible] s'était empressé de rendre à Monsieur l'[illegible] Edgeworth un hommage bien mérité, et j'avais joint à ma lettre, sans doute perdue, du 15

Juin, l'article de sa Gazette, avec la traduction; mais je n'ai plus cette pièce à ma disposition.)

Il me reste, maintenant, Monsieur, à vous rendre compte des affaires de monsieur votre frère, et de sa succession. Je commencerai par celle-ci. Elle se ressent de la modicité de son revenu, et de l'abondance de ses aumônes.

Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth a laissé si peu de mobilier, tant en linge qu'en habits et petits meubles, à son usage, que je ne crains pas de dire qu'il n'y en a pas pour la valeur de 20 livres sterling.

Plus, environ 150 volumes, la plûpart relatifs à la religion ou au culte catholique. Ils peuvent être comptés pour 40 ou 50 livres.

Plus enfin, quelques reliques, dont le prix ne peut être apprécié que par la piété des fidèles. L'une d'elles, assez richement montée, a été retenue par son Altesse Royale, Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, qui l'a très généreusement payée au fidèle et intéressant domestique de monsieur votre frère, à l'honnête Louis Bqusset, qui a eu la même maladie que son maître, et en même-tems que lui, qui l'a gagnée de lui, qui n'y a échappé que par miracle, et qui en est à-peine convalescent.

C'est à ce même domestique, Monsieur, que, d'après l'opinion de toute notre colonie, et d'après l'usage généralement pratiqué parmi nous, M. l'Archevêque de Reims et moi avons crû devoir remettre, et avons remis, toute la dépouille de son maître, dont vous

venez de lire la courte description. Seulement, Monsieur, comme nous avons pensé que peut-être vous désireriez avoir quelque bagatelle qui eut appartenu à ce frère chéri, et comme nous avons crû q'une de ses montres serait peut-être ce qui pourrait vous convenir d'avantage, nous avons défendu à Louis Bousset d'en disposer jusqu'à ce que vos intentions à cet egard nous fussent connues. Les montres sont au nombre de deux, et peuvent valoir ensemble 15 ou 20 livres au-plus.

Je passe à la partie pécuniaire de la succession ; partie de laquelle il ne sera disposé que d'après vos ordres ou instructions.

M. l'Abbé Edgeworth a laissé, pour tout argent comptant, 106 ducats de Hollande, faisant à peu-près 80 livres sterling.

Plus, les arrérages (à toucher) de 4 mois de sa pension de Russie, c'est-à-dire environ 78 livres.

Plus, les arrérages (à toucher) d'un semestre de son traitement d'Angleterre : c'est-à-dire 60 livres, si son dit traitement a continué de subir la réduction de moitié qui y avait été imposée, ou 120 livres, si cette réduction a été levée, grace aux soins que s'est donné Lord Hawkesbury.

Plus mille ducats (ou un peu moins de 800 livres) déposés chez M. Berner, banquier de cette ville, à 4 pour cent par mois.

Plus [illegible] cet objet a paru à M. l'Archevêque et à moi devoir être compté parmi les capitaux),

une trés belle boëte d'or émaillée, et enrichie de diamans, que l'Empereur Paul avait donné à monsieur votre frère, quand il alla de la part de Louis XVIII. porter à ce souverain les croix et décorations de l'ordre du St. Esprit. Cette boëte est dans l'ordre des présents que l'on estime 500 guinées ; mais qui, à la revente, perdent beaucoup de leur valeur.

En résumant ces différents articles, vous trouverez, Monsieur, que lorsque tout sera rentré de la succession pécuniaire de monsieur votre frère, elle pourra se monter à 1000 ou 1200 guinées.

J'oubliais de vous dire que Monsieur le Comte de L'Isle s'est chargé de tous les fraix de maladie et de sépulture, et que M. l'Archevêque de Reims et moi n'avons pas voulû, sans votre participation, disposer de la moindre somme, soit pour les pauvres, soit pour faire dire des messes; quoique ces deux espèces de legs nous parussent presque un devoir, de la part d'un homme aussi religieux et aussi charitable que M. l'Abbé Edgeworth.

Le silence que j'ai gardé jusqu'ici sur son testament, vous a sans-doute, Monsieur, déjà fait juger qu'il n'en avait pas laissé. Et en effet, monsiéur votre frère est mort sans avoir eu le tems de dicter ses dernières volontés.

Nous avons tous été surpris qu'il ne s'en fût pas occupé d'avance, et M. l'Archevêque de Reims et moi, avons droit d'en être plus étonnés que les autres; car nous l'avions consulté sur nos testamens. Il

avait même bien voulu signer le mien comme témoin, et avait consenti à y être nommé comme mon exécuteur testamentaire: et en cette occasion, comme en toute autre, il n'avoit cessé de dire qu'il allait s'occuper lui-même d'une précaution qu'il regardait comme très sage, et qu'il conseillait à tous ses amis.

Il a même été plus loin avec moi: et si je me cite, Monsieur, c'est uniquement parcequ'il a été plus explicite et plus détaillé dans les confidences qu'il m'a faites; car il n'est presque personne ici, entre ses amis, (à commencer par S. A. R. Mons. le Duc d'Angoulême, Mad. la Duchesse de Sérent, Mons. d'Archiduc de Reims, Mad. de Choisy, M. le Duc d'Havré, M. le Viscomte d'Agoult, &c.), il n'est presque personne, dis-je, à qui il n'ait parlé dans le même sens qu'à moi, et exprimé les mêmes intentions. Mais chacun, si j'ose ainsi parler, n'a reçu qu'une partie de ses volontés; et je me trouve le seul à qui il les ait toutes declarées dans leur ensemble, et à des époques successives, amenées par les circonstances.

J'atteste donc par l'honneur, Monsieur, j'atteste avec sermen[illegible] suis prêt à jurer devant Dieu et devant [illegible] que tout ce que je vais avoir l'honneur [illegible] déclarer sur les intentions de monsieur [illegible] est conforme à la plus exacte vérité.

Au commencement de l'année 1804, à Varsovie,

quand je lui parlai pour la première fois de mon testament, il m'interrompit, et me dit, comme me prenant à témoin : " Pour moi, mon testament sera court et bientôt fait. Tout ce que j'ai ici, tout ce que je laisserai en argent comptant de toute espèce, tous mes meubles, montres, bijoux, linge, &c. en un mot toute ma dépouille, je la donne à Bousset, mon domestique. Ma famille peut se passer de ce petit secours ; Bousset est avec moi depuis plus de dix ans : il m'a accompagné pendant le règne de la terreur révolutionnaire, quand la France entière n'était paz assez grande pour me cacher : c'est à sa fidélité et à sa discrétion que je dois peut-être la vie. Il a partagé tous mes périls : il a été le confident et le compagnon de ma fuite. J'ai tâché de le former au bien et à la piété ; il a répondu à mes espérances. Je ne veux pas qu'après moi il soit dans l'embarras ou le besoin. En un mot, je lui donne tout ce que j'ai." (Dans ce don il ne paraissait pas comprendre les répétitions qu'il pouvait avoir à faire en Irlande.)

Tel fut, Monsieur, le langage que monsieur votre frère me tint alors, et qu'il m'a souvent conconfirmé depuis.

Mais à l'époque où il perdit sa fortune en Irlande, (pardon, Monsieur, si je touche une corde aussi sensible), il crut devoir adopter d'autres dispositions, qui sans trop s'écarter des premières, se conciliassent cependant davantage avec ce qu'il regar-

dait comme une dette antérieure, et plus sacrée, de devoir et de justice.

Vous devez avoir encore une tante, Monsieur : cette tante très agée et très infirme demeure à Paris ; et monsieur votre frère continuait à lui envoyer des secours qui la faisaient vivre.

Vous n'ignorez pas non-plus qu'il éxiste une ancienne femme de chambre de madame votre mère et de madame votre sœur ; une Madame le Fèvre. Vous savez également que tout ce que possédait cette Madame le Fèvre était hypothéqué en Irlande ; et que les mêmes malheurs qui ont détruit la fortune de Monsieur L'Abbé Edgeworth, ont aussi causé la ruine de cette bonne vieille fille.

Monsieur votre frère me confia dans le tems ces tristes détails, et m'ajouta : " L'age de ma tante fait qu'elle ne s'occupe plus d'affaires ; et il me suffit de pourvoir à ce qu'elle ne manque pas. Mais Madame le Fèvre ignore, et je désire qu'elle puisse toujours ignorer, la perte qu'elle a faite. Jusqu'ici j'ai continué à lui faire toucher le même revenu, et elle croit qu'il vient de la même source. Je veux la laisser dans cette erreur. En conséquence, voici mon plan : Bousset est jeune. (Il a à-peine 30 ans !) Il peut attendre. J'ai ici une petite somme chez Monsieur Berner, et je veux peu-à-peu l'augmenter, jusqu'à ce qu'elle forme un capital, capable d'assurer ce que je donne par an à ma bonne tante, et à la bonne Madame le Fèvre ; et le capital,

après leur mort, passera à Bousset." Telles furent ses paroles presque littérales.

Enfin, Monsieur, pendant l'hyver dernier, le même Bousset, jeune homme très intéressant, né dans la Vendée, et pensant comme les Vendéens, dévoué à son maître, à son Roi, et à son Dieu, et modèle de sagesse, de piété, et de bonnes mœurs, Bousset, dis-je, fut volé. Un filou entra dans sa chambre, pendant qu'il servait la messe de son maître, força la serrure de sa malle, et lui enleva le fruit de ses épargnes depuis dix ans. On lui prît une bourse qui contenait 322 ducats, c'est-à-dire plus de 180 guinées.

Monsieur l'Abbé Edgeworth dit alors, non-seulement à Bousset, non-seulement à moi, mais en vérité je crois à toutes les personnes du château, que pourvû qu'il vécut, Bousset n'y perdrait rien, et que peu-à-peu il lui rendrait tout ce qui lui avait été pris. En effet, dès le mois suivant, il avait commencé à lui donner environ 10 guinées comme à-compte.

—— Je me résume, Monsieur; et, toujours sous la foi du serment, j'atteste,

1o. Que les intentions de monsieur votre frère, avaient d'abord été de laisser à son fidèle domestique tout ce dont il mourrait, (comme nous disons en termes de loi,) *vétu* et *saisi*.

2o. Qu'à l'époque de la perte qu'il a faite de sa fortune, il a changé son plan de la manière que je

vous ai expliqué : c'est-à-dire qu'il a voulu, avant tout, assurer à sa tante, et à Madame le Fèvre, la rente dont elles ont coutume de jouir ; mais de manière à ce que le capital de cette rente revînt à Bousset après leur mort.

Et 3o, que lors du vol fait à Bousset, il avait en quelque sorte pris l'engagement de l'en dédommager ; mais en subordonnant toutefois cet engagement à la durée de sa propre vie.

Je vous ai tout dit, Monsieur ; et je ne vous ai rien dit qui ne soit connu de nos augustes Princes, de tous les amis de monsieur votre frère, et en vérité de presque toutes les personnes qui habitent ce château—je veux dire de la petite colonie des Français restés fidèles à leur devoir et à leur serment, et ayant conservé leur vie et leurs personnes plus particulièrement encore que les autres au service de leurs maîtres.

Maintenant c'est à vous de prononcer : et quoique vous prononciez, Monsieur, vous pouvez être assuré que M. L'Archevêque de Reims et moi, nous remplirons fidèlement et ponctuellement vos intentions.

J'ai seulement l'honneur de vous observer, que dans tous les cas il sera indispensable que vous nous fassiez passer une procuration, au nom de la personne qu'il vous plaira de choisir ; et que cette procuration renferme tous les pouvoirs qui seront nécessaires pour exécuter vos intentions. Il faudra, entr'autres, que la personne soit autorisée à recevoir et à donner quittance, pour tout l'argent qui pour-

rait se trouver redû à M. L'Abbé Edgeworth ; soit par les banquiers de cette ville, ou autres ; soit par les trésoriers des gouvernemens de Russie et d'Angleterre, pour ce qui peut lui être encore dû sur ses traitemens et pensions ; soit par toutes autres personnes quelconque.

Vous voudrez bien, Monsieur, stipuler si votre dessein est d'affecter une somme quelconque pour des aumônes ; et une autre, (suivant l'usage catholique), pour faire dire des messes pour le repos de l'ame de monsieur votre frère. 25 ducats pour chacune de ces destinations nous paraissent devoir suffire.

Si vous jugez, Monsieur, devoir suivre littéralement les intentions de M. L'Abbé Edgworth, telles que je vous les ai fait connaître, et si vous me donnez vos ordres en conséquence, voici la marche que nous tiendrons.—(Mais avant tout il faudra que vous ayez la bonté de me dire, autant que vous pourrez le savoir, quelle est la rente que monsieur votre frère payait à sa tante, et quelle à Mlle. le Fèvre, car je n'en ai pas trouvé la note dans les papiers.)

Au moyen de votre procuration, M.L'Archevêque de Reims et moi nous commencerons par toucher les diverses sommes qui peuvent être dues à monsieur votre frère. Nous enverrons sa boëte à Petersbourg, pour y être vendue du mieux qu'il se pourra. En un mot, nous réaliserons tous ses capitaux, en prélevant dessus seulement la somme que vous aurez destinée pour des aumônes et pour des messes.

Cette somme qui, comme j'ai eu l'honneur de

vous le dire, se montera peut-être à 11 ou 12 cent livres sterling, nous la placerons ici d'une manière solide, à 5 ou à 6 pour cent; de manière à pouvoir à la fois en garantir *le produit*, tant à madame votre tante qu'à Mlle. le Fèvre, et en assurer le *capital* après leur mort à Louis Bousset.

Le capital, Monsieur, sera sans-doute insuffisant pour completter la rente due aux deux personnes qui y ont droit: mais les bontés de Monsieur le Comte de L'Isle et même à son défaut—celles de Leurs Altesses Royales Monseigneur et Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, y pourvoiront chaque année. Nous sommes, Monsieur, autorisés à vous l'annoncer.

Après la mort de madame votre tante et de Mlle. le Fèvre, lepetit fond que nos aurons placé reviendra, comme il a été dit, à Louis Bousset: et pendant leur vie, il sera pris des mesures pour qu'elles touchent régulièrment à Paris leur petit revenu; de manière à leur laisser ignorer toujours, s'il est possible, non-seulement qu'elles ont perdu leur fortune, mais qn'elles ont aussi perdu leur ami et leur bienfaiteur. De cette façon, tout embarras vous sera ôté, et vous aurez la satisfaction de penser que monsieur votre frère, du haut des cieux, approuve et bénit les arrangemens que vous aurez permis de prendre en son nom.

Encore un mot sur les papiers que monsieur votre frère a laissés. Il y en avait de plusieurs sortes. Par exemple:

1°. Des manuscrits sur des matières relatives à son

état de prêtre catholique, et quelques-uns touchant sa place d'Aumônier du Roi. Le tout a été remis à la personne qui l'a remplacé en cette dernière qualité.

2°. Des notes sur les divers secours qu'il avait à distribuer, de la part de Monsieur le Comte de L'Isle, à des Français fidèles, expatriés et indigents. Elles ont de même été remises à son successeur.

3°. Quelques papiers relatifs à lui; tels que ses dégrés de licence, ses lettres de prêtrise, de grand vicaire, &c.;—les titres des 8,000 livres sterling que vous lui deviez, et des 4,000 livres que vous deviez à mademoiselle votre sœur; enfin quelques notes très vagues, très obscures même, relatives à ses dépenses personnelles. Vous aurez, s'il vous plait, Monsieur, la bonté de me donner vos ordres pour cette classe de papiers.

4°. Enfin ses diverses correspondances, tant avec vous, Monsieur, qu'avec diverses personnes qui lui écrivaient souvent: les unes par un sentiment d'amitié, et pour le plaisir de recevoir de ses nouvelles; les autres pour le consulter, lui parler de leur conscience, quelquefois de leurs affaires, et toujours de choses plus ou moins délicates.—M. L'Archevêque et moi avons pensé que nous ne pouvons trop respecter, ni nous hâter de faire disparaitre, ces épanchemens de confiance intime, qui reposaient dans son portefeuille [illegible] En conséquence, toutes lett[illegible] ont annoncé une correspon[illegible]

été brulées sans aller plur loin. Les vôtres, Monsieur, ont subi le même sort ; et nous nous sommes même défendus d'y chercher des détails douloureux qui auraient pû nous éclaircir sur la nature des pertes que monsieur votre frère avait eprouvées pour sa fortune.

——Voici une lettre énorme, Monsieur, et une lettre bien pénible pour vous, par les tristes détails qu'elle renferme : je ne puis vous en faire d'excuses, puisque ces détails vous étaient nécessaires ; mais je vous prie de les lire avec indulgence pour la rédaction, et de les recevoir comme un gage de la tendre amitié, du dévouement sans bornes, que je portais à monsieur votre frère, et du respect que je conserverai toujours pour un homme qui lui tenait d'aussi près que vous.

J'ai l'honneur d'être très sincèrement,
Monsieur,
Votre très humble et très obéissant Serviteur,
Le Marquis de Bonnay,
Maréchal des Camps et Armées au service
de sa Majesté très Chrétienne.

(No. VI.)

TRANSLATION

OF

The Epitaph

COMPOSED BY LOUIS XVIII.

ON THE

ABBÉ EDGEWORTH.

NOTE.

[The Editor feels that it is necessary to apologize for the attempt to translate this Epitaph.—Though Latin has been called the language of the tombs, yet it is only as it is universal that it can be justly styled so. The Editor does not subscribe to the sentiments of those who signed the literary *round robin* which petitioned Dr. Johnson to write the inscription on Goldsmith's monument in English; but to a translation of an Epitaph, even if inscribed upon a tomb, no classical objection should outweigh the consideration of the pleasure and advantage that may be derived from it, by those who are not conversant with the learned languages.

No individual should be denied access to those praises on the dead, which inspire noble emulation in the living; and if this attempt reveals to a single individual, to whom it would have otherwise remained unknown, the fidelity of the Abbé Edgeworth to his King, and the [illegible] King to his follower, the Editor will [illegible] tion for all that critics and pedants [illegible] tion.]

HERE LIES

THE VERY REVEREND

HENRY ESSEX EDGEWORTH OF FIRMONT;

A PRIEST OF THE HOLY CHURCH OF GOD;

VICAR-GENERAL OF THE DIOCESE OF PARIS, &c.

WHO,

PURSUING THE STEPS OF OUR REDEEMER,

WAS AN EYE TO THE BLIND,

A STAFF TO THE LAME,

A FATHER TO THE POOR,

AND A CONSOLER OF THE AFFLICTED.

WHEN

LOUIS XVI.

WAS GIVEN UP TO DEATH

BY HIS IMPIOUS AND REBELLIOUS SUBJECTS,

HE

SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTE MARTYR

IN HIS LAST STRUGGLE,

AND POINTED OUT TO HIM

THE OPENING HEAVENS.

SNATCHED FROM THE HANDS OF THE REGICIDES

BY THE WONDERFUL PROTECTION OF

GOD.

HE

VOLUNTARILY ATTACHED HIMSELF TO

LOUIS XVIII.

WHEN HE SIGNIFIED HIS WISH FOR HIS SERVICES.

TO WHOM, AND TO WHOSE ROYAL FAMILY

AND FAITHFUL HOUSEHOLD,

HE PROVED HIMSELF FOR THE SPACE OF TEN YEARS,

AN EXAMPLE OF VIRTUE

AND AN ASSUAGER OF MISFORTUNE.

DRIVEN FROM KINGDOM TO KINGDOM

BY THE CALAMITY OF THE TIMES,

HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD,

EVER LIKE TO HIM

WHO POSSESSED HIS SOLE DEVOTION.

AT LENGTH FULL OF GOOD-WORKS,

HE DIED

THE 22D DAY OF MAY,

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1807,

AGED 62.

May he rest in peace.

FINIS.

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